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PICASSO: *Femme à la Corneille*. 1904

# AFTER PICASSO

BY JAMES THRALL SOBY

HARTFORD: EDWIN VALENTINE MITCHELL

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1935

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*for Elmina*

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# FOREWORD

IN CALLING this book "After Picasso," I have meant to imply two things: first, that in Paris certain painters younger than Picasso have already produced enough important work so that they, and not he, must stand for the latest developments in modern art; second, that much in the work of these younger painters was originally derived from Picasso. I have not meant to imply that Picasso is failing as a painter, but that he is already, perhaps to his great disgust, an old master of modern painting. No matter how revolutionary his most recent painting may be, it is nonetheless the work of a man who has for thirty years been the great contemporary artist. One can today merely restate his genius: even the prolific nineteenth century can offer us few his equal. The one test which remains to be applied to his work is the crucial test of time. Later criticism, emphasizing quality rather than innovation, may separate his work into good periods and bad. It can, however, scarcely ignore Picasso without ignoring all we know as modern art, and even ignoring modern art as a general movement, must still leave a place for him.

After thirty years, a reaction against the hypothesis of "painting as architecture," for which Picasso primarily stands, is historically inevitable. It is the purpose of this book to document briefly several aspects of this reaction as it has manifested itself in the work of

two groups of artists, the Neo-Romantics and the Surrealists. To my mind, these two groups, in separate ways, have achieved the most tangible and successful reaction to appear thus far against Picasso's Cubism and its later ramifications. Yet the Neo-Romantics have been painting seriously for less than ten years, and have produced their best work within the last five. Though many of the Surrealists are older than one might expect them to be, the most promising of them, Salvador Dali, is the youngest, and has done his most brilliant painting since 1930. Arguments as to the absolute value of these younger painters are, of course, still speculative, but the present importance of both Neo-Romanticism and Surrealism can hardly be over-emphasized. They represent an authentic romantic revival for which parallels can certainly be found in literature and perhaps can be found in music.

As will be seen, however, the reaction against Picasso's kind of abstract art has paradoxically been given impetus by elements in Picasso's own work. For the Surrealists, his *papiers collés*, for the Neo-Romantics, his Blue and Rose periods, have served as starting points in their struggle to overthrow the formula of "painting as architecture" for which Picasso again, following Seurat and Cezanne, has been responsible. The work of the younger painters is thus, in a double sense, "After Picasso."

J. T. S.

# THE GENERAL BACKGROUND OF THE NEWER PAINTING

TO UNDERSTAND the reaction of the Neo-Romantics and the Surrealists against the Cubists' principle of "painting as architecture", it is essential to understand what made "painting as architecture" a necessary dictum for Picasso's generation. Before the Cubists, Expressionism had been, in its turn, a natural reaction against the sterile scientism of the Impressionists. It had shared with Impressionism, however, a revulsion from the photographic technique of anecdotal painting in the earlier nineteenth century. The Post-Impressionists, Gauguin and Van Gogh, handed the tenets of Expressionism on to the Fauves—Matisse, Derain, Rouault, etc. Both Post-Impressionists and Fauves came to dislike the copybook as much as they disliked scientism, and they distrusted discipline because it had so often led to imitation. Their object was to liberate talent from the restrictions of both the academy and science, and to release in art the wellsprings of emotion. Thus Van Gogh became a painter, who might not have dared without the assurance that both aesthetics and sociology were moving to a new state in which conviction would be all-important.

What had meant release for Van Gogh, proved a disagreeable freedom for minor painters following him. Individual exoticism turned out to be anything but dependable as a source of inspiration to artists. The proletarian revolution, which might have provided painters with

an emotional outlet, was aborted by an aristocratic convulsion in the arts. In Degas and the late Renoirs, bourgeois society found new aesthetic justification. The profound convictions of a Van Gogh were diverted from human to aesthetic problems by Seurat and Cezanne, or dwindled to caste neuroticisms with Lautrec. Succeeding the Post-Impressionists, the Fauves produced no Van Gogh, nor did they equal Gauguin. Instead, they produced a few fine painters who painted singularly few good pictures until after they had deserted Fauvism for more disciplined ways. By 1908, there was danger that the principle of self-expression, a natural outlet for inferior minds, would end up as tiresome as the previous conceptions of Nature as Truth or Nature as Science. In Germany, Expressionism continued for twenty years, and did almost exactly that.

It was the Cubists who saw the need for turning painting professional until some order had been reestablished. The minor Expressionists had made art a confessional to which they brought their monotonous libidos, believing pathetically that they were worth recording. Against such promiscuity, the remedy suggested by the Cubists was to restore the rigid, architectural framework which had lain behind the painting of Poussin, Ingres and latterly, of Seurat and Cezanne. By insisting on this framework as the basis of art, the Cubists intended to raise technical barriers over which only competent painters could pass. For a romantic artist like Picasso, the necessity for formal order in art must have at first seemed distasteful. But irritated by the cacophonies of the Fauves, he and Braque followed Cezanne away from exoticism towards equilibrium in painting. As a final purification of all the extraneous influences which literature had

long been imposing on art, the representation of subject-matter and objects was done away with by the Cubists. Cubism<sup>1</sup> gave painting the greatest housecleaning it had ever had. The issues of art, romantic or classic, could never become so confused again.

To painters, the triumph of Picasso and Braque was so evident after the first few years of Cubism, that a return to architecture became by far the best-defined aesthetic in the modern movement. Modern painting was, of course, extremely complex, and included a number of other important tendencies, for instance those represented by Matisse, Derain and Rouault, which had little to do with Cubism. But with the collapse of Fauvism, no painter outside of Cubism made himself responsible for an integral plan of painting as the Cubists were doing, and the play of intellectual ideas within an architectural framework represented the main direction of painting for at least fifteen years after the first Cubist exhibition in 1908.

We shall see, however, that the spirit of what the Cubists dismissed as "literature" persisted in the face of the triumph of Cubism, though it necessarily occupied a minor place until 1924. The importance of painters of fantasy, like Chirico and Paul Klee, while recognized, did not seem great in comparison with that of painters like Picasso and Braque. Few people thought that the literary painting of Chirico and Klee would so soon culminate in a revolt against Cubism, or that sardonic protests against art in general by Marcel Duchamp and Picabia would lead, through Dada, to a counter-aesthetic like that

<sup>1</sup> Cubism, the term usually used to describe the abstract art of Picasso, Braque and their followers, from 1908 until the War, is here used also to denote the climax of the tendency towards "painting as architecture". The tendency, of course, continued much later.

proposed by Surrealism. The prestige of Cubism seemed temporarily fixed and indestructible. Cubism seemed destined to undergo changes, of course, but it appeared likely to stand as the central core of art in the first half of this century. Picasso might give up the ascetic restraint of his first Cubist works for an almost baroque system of design; Braque might desert briefly his faith in "the intelligence that controls emotion"; but both would remain devoted to formal order in painting. That art would continue to be actively anti-literary seemed a foregone conclusion.

Nevertheless, in 1924 the rapidly spreading fame of Surrealism announced the rebirth of literary, anecdotal painting, and Chirico and Klee had immediately to be reappraised as precursors of a new aesthetic. Yet the early Surrealists continued to believe in the kind of art that we have come to describe by the general term "abstract". As we shall see, their literary painting was based on a reconstruction of Cubism along non-architectural lines. Being only a few years younger than Picasso, the first Surrealists were inevitably influenced by his contempt for literal representation. They had grown up full of admiration for Picasso; in their early art they leaned on him more heavily than they did on Chirico. Instead of breaking away entirely from Picasso's Cubism, they adapted it to their own romantic ends and created a new kind of abstract art in the *collage*.<sup>2</sup>

Not until several years later did Surrealism rid itself of abstract techniques, in the painting of the young Catalan, Salvador Dali. Twenty-five years younger than Picasso, Dali has been able to formulate an art that is independent of the aesthetics which began to form

<sup>2</sup> For a definition of this term see note to page 80.

around 1908. He has been able to go behind all twentieth century painting and discover, in the minute realism of certain nineteenth century artists, a technique suitable for the paranoiac symbols that he has chosen to paint. How he has proceeded and in what other ways he differs from the earlier Surrealists, we shall see later on, but he must be mentioned here as representing a complete rather than a partial reaction against Cubism.

Meanwhile, about 1926, a great deal was heard about a group of young painters, the Neo-Romantics, who deliberately renounced the value of all abstract art, whether classic or romantic. Their first works showed that they intended to abandon non-representational painting for a return to sentiment in subject-matter and in the handling of subject-matter. Like Dali, they belonged, in contrast to the early Surrealists, to a generation a quarter century younger than Picasso's. Their revolt against Cubism was more marked than that of the early Surrealists (and it is for this reason that they are considered first in this book) though not more marked than that of Dali. Being young, they were able to accept Picasso's upheaval of tradition as an accomplished fact and to proceed with a counter-revolution. They had escaped the immense suction of his Cubist-architectural ideas by being too young to listen. While Picasso's contempt for his own early periods had communicated itself to painters his age, the Neo-Romantics were able to discover his Blue and Rose periods as they would discover the work of a dead and neglected painter. Preceding Dali by several years, they were the first painters after Picasso to go behind all conspicuously modern art and to rediscover romantic sources of inspiration as well as of technique. Consequently, their art

cannot be judged by the standards which were applicable to Cubism and its later ramifications. New standards whereby to judge the art of the Surrealists are essential too, and since both movements represent a reaction from Cubism, certain of the new standards will apply to both.

In defining these new standards, perhaps the first general statement to be made is that both Neo-Romantic and Surrealist painting are meant to touch the emotions rather than to appeal to the intellect. Surrealism, as well as Neo-Romanticism, is entirely a romantic movement, and in order to appraise its art we must abandon the criteria of classical composition (the relation of line to line and mass to mass) which were applicable to Cubism. The emotional restraint of Cubism is relaxed in Surrealism and Neo-Romanticism, and is replaced by a search for poetic intensity. The art of the Surrealists, whether abstract or not, tries to be anti-architectural in the extreme; while usually keeping clear of sentimentality, the Neo-Romantic painters are filling their canvases with unashamed poignancy. In contrast to the intellectual classicism of Picasso's still-life (See plate 30), Berard's sketch for a ballet curtain (See plate 5) shows the unpremeditated and fragile record of an impulse. Compared with one of Braque's Cubist compositions, Dali's painting, *Le spectre de Vermeer de Delft pouvant être utilisé comme table (théorie phénoménologique du meuble-aliment)*, (See plate 58) marks the return of the literary anecdote in the guise of Freudian psychology.

For another thing, the painting of the Neo-Romantics and the Surrealists is more readily communicable than the painting of the Cubists. The painting of the Neo-Romantics, Eugene Berman and

Leonide is, in fact, so easily enjoyed that people suspect it of being not altogether serious. The public having caught up, out of breath and belligerent, with the cult for the incomprehensible, is indignant at being paid off with graphic art that is understandable, with art that requires merely an eye for rich color and subtle draftsmanship.

Even Surrealism is more widely understood than the abstract painting of the Picasso group. It must, however, face the charge, that all subconscious symbolism springs from individual rather than universal experience and is consequently obscured in meaning. (Thus many of the obsessions of Blake and even of Delacroix remain concealed and unexplained in their work.) But Surrealism does rest on more or less common experience with dream imagery, and a great deal of it can be understood by a great many people. (The fact that Dali has been signed to do Surrealist drawings for the Hearst papers, seems proof enough of this fact. It is interesting too, that the most intelligent review of Dali's 1934 exhibition in New York was to be found in the pages of a tabloid.) Whereas Cubism is extremely beautiful to an initiated few, Surrealism does seem able to communicate at least a part of its message to people without special knowledge of art. While few people have penetrated the professional secrecy of Cubism, many are at least strangely excited by Dali's limp watches (See plate 57).

The work of both Neo-Romantics and Surrealists is refreshing. Whether they are content with fine painting in the traditional sense, as the Neo-Romantics are, or whether they deny the conventional value of art, as the Surrealists do, the feeling of reduced tension that comes with them is a sign of their worth. Especially with the Neo-

Romantics, painting seems ready to exist in the old sense of quality, free at last from the burden of revolutionary ideas.<sup>3</sup> It is not that their ideas are unoriginal, or that they are not near genius, but that theirs is a quiet intelligence rather than an enforced intellectuality. The intelligence of the Surrealists can hardly be called quiet, but they too are restoring a sense of fragility and existence in time which had almost been lost to painting. The irritated, passing vision of one of Dali's paintings, for instance, shows the dictation which imagination can have at one time and not have again. Even for those who deplore his *exploration des fesses*, the sweep of momentary conviction is there.

Both Neo-Romantics and Surrealists are a relief from the uncomfortable feeling that many of the abstract painters could repeat their successes at any hour on any day. This was never true of Picasso and seldom true of Braque and Gris, but a satisfactory arrangement of intellectual ideas within a rigid framework had come to be automatic and tiresome with lesser painters. Academic stringencies had grown up around Picasso as they had grown up around David a hundred years before. And since revolutions in French art have almost invariably been accomplished formally, through group uprisings, Neo-Romanticism and Surrealism have provided individual artists with the necessary background for revolt.

The need for formalized group aims in painting has been particularly important during the last two centuries. With the collapse of the Church and the Nobility as patronizing forces in art, with the later collapse of the Post-Impressionist's faith in self-expression, the

<sup>3</sup> The 1934 paintings of Tchelitchev are a notable exception to this statement.

need for what André Berge called "a metaphysical assurance" has been stronger and stronger. Faced with the hopeless complexity of modern life, the painter has been forced to seek support from intellectual *coteries*, at least until he has been able to stand alone. He has had to join small, tight groups of kindred artists and writers who by their enthusiasm for what he and they were doing, could shut him off from the distractions of other possibilities in art. Both the Neo-Romantics and Surrealists at first leaned heavily on group activity. Both have availed themselves of "a metaphysical assurance". For the Neo-Romantics, a shared, traditional melancholy has served; for the Surrealists, a negation of reason which is in itself an intellectual formula; for others, Communism. Anything will do, provided it supplies a sufficiently stable basis on which painters can test their strength and from which they can get direction.

We can now proceed to discover in what degree Neo-Romanticism and Surrealism have been successful in producing important artists. But as part of this brief historical summary, it remains to be said, that both Neo-Romanticism and Surrealism have survived any number of premature, threatened ends of activity. Just as the death of abstract art was hailed on all sides a year after Cubism was born, so there have been annual obituaries for Neo-Romanticism and Surrealism. Curiously, the detractors of the new movements have often been the very people who clamored for an end to "painting as architecture". Yet nothing appears so disturbing as not seeing what goes on in a painting. Thus neither Neo-Romanticism nor Surrealism has the "shock value" of Cubism, though Surrealism should have more. People miss this "shock value", and are inclined to describe its

absence as a sign of weakness in the new painting. Yet both Neo-Romanticism and Surrealism continue to gain strength. Neither movement seems at all ready to occupy the grave which detractors have long held open for both.

# THE NEO-ROMANTICS

THE very closeness of group purpose, which characterized the first years of Neo-Romanticism, was what ultimately broke up the group. Just as Picasso and Braque, as Cubists, had painted so much alike that they began to suspect each other of plagiarism, so the Neo-Romantics commenced to quarrel over the spiritual necessity that had brought them together. The principle behind Neo-Romantic painting was forceful enough to support the few painters who shared it, but there were inevitable misunderstandings as to which one had had the idea first. By 1930, the Neo-Romantics had gone their separate ways, but by that time Neo-Romanticism had served its purpose as "a metaphysical assurance". The new movement had made its imprint on the arts through group activity, and each painter had drawn from the movement its own particular value for him.

In the beginning of Neo-Romanticism, it had been essential for Berard, Tchelitchew, Berman, Tonny, and Leonide to stress the fact that they were poets. No one believed them. No one believed at first that, after twenty years of abstract painting, a group of painters could suddenly return to painting the very elements of sentiment which abstract art had been careful to suppress. The necessity for overstatement was therefore clear. In order to prove that they were poets, they had to say so unmistakably. Their first paintings were delib-

erately obscured by the darkness and thickness of the pigment. In reaction from what seemed to them the over-clear statement of abstractions, they attempted to cover their canvases with a mystifying veil. For this purpose, both the heavy texture of their paintings and the gloomy atmosphere created by their use of a restricted, dark palette, were admirable. Most often, remembering Picasso's Blue period, they painted in a deep, monochrome blue, which filled their paintings with a disturbing sadness, and suggested the moribund atmosphere of the Romantic poets.

Their romanticism and their reaction from Cubism were stressed further by the fact that they painted the human figure and face. In place of man's ideas, which the Cubists had painted, the Neo-Romantics painted man's spirit. Thus, in a way, they shared the Surrealists' negation of reason, but their images of man were thoughtful, and expressed in fairly complicated terms. Man, as they painted him, was a melancholy being, depressed as much by the weight of his own soul as by the complexity of the world around him. Usually, they painted him asleep or sitting idly in a darkened room. The futility and the sweetness of escape were seen in the weariness of his eyes and in the dull abandon of his gestures. Flung on dark couches, leaning against the tenebrous curtains of ancient doorways, sitting bolt upright and staring away from his own thoughts, man was portrayed in terms of his still nostalgia: an oppressed being in whom despair was moving and irreparable.

All of the Neo-Romantics are better painters now than they were during the first year of the movement. Yet there is a haunting elegance about these first paintings which came as a reaction from the

glib assurance of the abstractionists. Marking the artist's hesitation after a long period of assertion, they have the clear poignancy of all romantic revivals. Sentimental they probably are at times, but their sentimentality is strangely piercing and alive. They illustrate the painter's rediscovery of his emotions, and they communicate this rediscovery with force.

Neo-Romanticism provided the tradition of art with the most legitimate group reaction to appear after the beginning of Cubism. In doing so, it had accomplished its purpose, and the individual artists were free and prepared to go their separate ways.

CHRISTIAN BERARD was born in Paris in 1902. He studied painting under Vuillard and Maurice Denis at the Academie Ranson. Around 1925, he commenced to show drawings and a few paintings, and he has had frequent exhibitions in Paris ever since. Particularly important exhibitions were those of his paintings at the Galerie Vignon in May, 1930, and of his portraits at the Galerie Pierre Colle in May, 1931. His drawings were shown in May, 1930, at the Galerie Bonjean, again at the same gallery in May, 1931, and at the Julien Levy Gallery, New York, in 1934. The fact that he alone of the Neo-Romantic group was French, made him more immediately acceptable to progressive French collectors and critics, though Tchelitchev was generally considered the *chef d'école* during the first years of Neo-Romanticism.

Berard's first paintings were marked by a higher emotional content than those of the other Neo-Romantics. At the same time, he

went even farther than they in his attempts at deliberate mystification. Instead of covering his canvas with successive layers of paint, as Berman did, he first treated the support with a thick coating of candle grease. On top of this he painted his figures and faces in a deep, atmospheric blue derived from Picasso's Blue period. The surface of his paintings did not look worked and rough, as did Berman's, but their heavy undercoatings gave them a gloomy, and often a disturbingly smudgy, appearance.

With the immense tradition of French art behind him, Berard was obliged to express his pessimism in painter's terms from the beginning. And since at first he scarcely knew how to paint at all, his earliest paintings showed none of the mature style which the Russians, Tchelitchev and Berman, showed comparatively early. (The literary influence, so apparent in their early work, made their melancholy figures both agreeable and plausible.) Berard, on the other hand, was forced through a longer, and perhaps purer, apprenticeship. When he did learn how to paint, a few years later than the Russians, he began to exhibit an instinctive skill and a spontaneity which made, and still makes, all other Neo-Romantic painting look labored in comparison.

Like all the Neo-Romantics during the early years of the movement, he painted man, but he painted a picture of man rather than an idea about man as the others did. There was a minimum of intellectual interference between what his emotion dictated him to paint and what he actually painted. Thus, if his pictures were not very good, he had nothing to fall back upon, whereas Tchelitchev's idea about man might be interesting if his painting were not. In

Berard's first paintings the technical limitations were so apparent that nothing else mattered. The smudgy greasiness of his surfaces, the almost monochrome color and negligent drawing, were barriers to appreciation that only the devoted could hurdle. But he never lost that sharp contact with reality which has always been an attribute of French painting, however difficult and abstruse. Even if his sentiment was badly expressed, it was nevertheless real, and it could some day exist independent of the literary subterfuges to which the other Neo-Romantics have always resorted in varying degrees. When he had finally learned to paint, he was able to present pictorially the facts about his emotion while the other Neo-Romantics were obliged to *state* the facts about theirs. As he developed his technique, he remained free to paint naturally and to communicate simply but forcefully the extraordinary emotional content that had been confused in his first paintings.

From the beginning, he showed a willful disregard for plastic organization and clarity. In a painting like the *Dormeur*, (See plate 2) the head is drawn out of line and distorted, yet it has an inexplicable strength. Distortion is employed entirely for psychic purpose and effect. Unlike the distortions of Matisse, which are invariably used to strengthen the plastic continuity, Berard's distortions often run deliberately counter to the apparent scheme of composition. The astonishing line of the back of the head in the *Dormeur* is evidence that Neo-Romanticism is even further removed from the Fauves' systems of design than from the Cubists' formal order. The poetic sentiment in all of Berard's pictures is mysteriously accented by the kind of dislocated drawing so obvious in the *Dor-*

*meur*. For him, any means is permissible which will increase the illusion of isolated melancholy conveyed by his pictures.

Like all painting which depends on a highly emotional attack, Berard's painting fails as often as it succeeds. In the early series of heads and figures, painted in blue and dull gray, later in gray and white, many are good and many are extremely bad. Berard's emotion is translated almost mystically to the canvas or it is not translated at all. He has none of the metaphysical resourcefulness which, as we shall see, Tchelitchev has. He is, however, more original, and was, even in his early work, less dependent on Picasso's Blue and Rose periods. If the quality of his invention is often stretched out of scale, it is because his invention is more ambitious than that of the other Neo-Romantics, though it appears less so. The high emotional content of his painting makes it inevitable that he will occasionally push sentiment too far. The danger of bathos is always present, but usually avoided. In a painting like the *Dormeur* and in a drawing like the *Figures*, (See plate 3) Berard has achieved a new and distinguished romanticism in which his morbid nostalgia communicates itself effortlessly but with an uncanny sharpness.

The extreme instability of his genius (and the word "genius" fits Berard better than it does any young painter alive) made it inevitable that he would often waste himself on minor projects. It is fortunate, therefore, that around 1930 he showed a talent and a liking for portraits. In tracing the sources of these portraits, the most salient fact is that he admired very much the early portraits of Degas. It seems equally obvious that the effect of the early influence from Picasso's Rose period continued long after the atmospheric gloom

of Picasso's Blue period had disappeared from his paintings. It is certain, too, that he was impressed by the easy fluidity of Derain's best painting, and that he liked the emotionalized reflection of Picasso's drawing that appears in the work of Modigliani. Certainly Degas taught him to abandon the dull grays and blues of his early pictures for the subtle filmy colors of the Degas portraits painted before 1875. Degas taught him, as well, a good deal about psychological portraiture of the face itself, which Degas in turn had learned from the Daguerreotype. But it was to be several years before Berard would model the face with color rather than draw it in, with the eyes as points of focus.

Though these sources are obvious in Berard's portraits from 1930 to 1932, the sum total of what emerges in any good portrait by him is inexplicable in terms of other artists. Why, for instance, the portrait of Jean Cocteau (See plate 4) should be so vivid a document cannot easily be explained. Berard's talent for getting a likeness is evident, but he has been astonishingly scornful of this gift. In the portrait of Cocteau, he has barely concentrated on exact likeness at all. The shape of the head is merely sketched, and Berard has been so impatient with detail that the shoulders are carelessly blocked in and covered with a few trivial lines by way of ornament. Yet the portrait has an uncanny intensity and a sense of suspended excitement which make it remarkable. Behind the seeming carelessness of technique, there is an extraordinary nervous skill which makes each brushstroke and line count for a fraction of the emotional whole. Curiously enough, in this art which seems accidental and barely dependent on composition, every accent must be in its right place or

the emotional edifice falls down. Berard's painting cannot be redeemed by occasional fine passages; it is so closely knit and so intense, that it exists as an impulsive, complete entity or it goes to pieces entirely.

His best portraits are those of friends whom he has known long and well, portraits like those of Cocteau, Pierre Colle, Boris Kochno, René Crevel and others. There must be a personal and specific understanding between the painter and his subject, in order to create that emotional tension on which these portraits are based. While the curious accents of color and the impatient, wavering lines of the portraits build up an atmosphere of sentiment, the force of these paintings is not altogether explicable in terms of technique. What makes them exceptional is the profound and acute observation which has long gone on between artist and subject, between subject and artist. In Berard's portraits, the subject stares at the painter quite as intently as the painter must have stared at his subject.

Though most good paintings convey a fund of information about both artist and subject, few carry as clearly as Berard's the imprint of the moment when they were painted. The stillness of his portraits, coupled with their intense animation held momentarily quiet, creates an elegiac and temporal mood for them. While Picasso's portraits, such as the famous one of Gertrude Stein, are fixed in their calm and are imperturbable, Berard's, equally motionless, have a repressed uneasiness. Instead of being expositions of a painter's formal style, his portraits are alive with human implications, and establish a vivid illusion of circumstance. For modern artists, the art of portraiture has become less and less a labor of love. Only Berard seems ready to

restore that eighteenth century equilibrium, wherein artist and subject were distinguished alike, and each revealed the most fragile shades of his character.

About all Berard's best pictures, there is a quality of magic which differentiates them from those of the other Neo-Romantics. While one feels, on looking at the works of Tchelitchew and Berman, an appreciation of their qualities respectively as draftsman and as painter, both the powers and the limitations of the medium used are less apparent in Berard. The very property of his magic makes him more difficult to understand than most contemporary painters. Nearly everyone is at first repulsed by the surface casualness of his painting and by its apparent atmosphere of *chic*. Presently one comes to admire his genius, but to dismiss him as being too facile. This opinion of him is not, as one comes to find out, at all true, nor is *chic* more than a superficial aspect of his lesser work. Yet one is encouraged in this opinion by the fact that Berard has done a considerable amount of casual sketching for the international magazines of fashion. The justification for this aspect of his work lies in the fact that several years ago Berard is said to have decided to do for his generation what Van Dongen failed to do for his: to document, like Proust, the *haut monde* of society and art.

Berard is ideally suited to such a task. He brings to the fugitive aspects of life a gift of sympathetic visualization. Whereas an illustrator like Lautrec, in trying to perpetuate the temporal scenes of *fin de siècle* Paris, succeeded in fixing them even more completely in their own time, Berard is by nature not an illustrator at all. Whatever he records is necessarily something that has touched him deeply.

Except for his occasional fashion sketches, the surface appearances of society pass by him entirely; what he seizes is recorded in the fragility of its essence.

How well he has succeeded at the documentation of the *haut monde*, it is impossible to judge fairly. Most of his portraits have gone directly to the drawing-rooms of his subjects, and only an occasional one has made its way to the art galleries. He has been secluded from the commercial art world by the social groups to which he belongs. But from the few sketches and wash drawings that have been shown, (he has never painted more than a very few oil paintings each year) it is apparent that he has learned a dangerous facility both in drawing and in the use of atmospheric wash in pastel colors. The drawings themselves are formed by hard, quick lines or are drawn in broadly with a brush. The ones that strive most for elegance are often the least elegant.

Nevertheless, the best of his wash drawings and sketches, whether social documents or not, have an immense vitality. If one is at first impatient with their lack of depth, one comes finally to admire them as the most impulsive records of Neo-Romanticism. While the drawings of Tchelitchev appeal at once as finished masterpieces of draftsmanship, the drawings of Berard make their point more slowly, through a subtle and hallucinatory quality of emotion. In a wash drawing like that made for the ballet, *Mozartiana*, (See plate 5) the whole force of his willful dislocation is apparent, and the use of the deep red, atmospheric wash is particularly successful.

Georges Balanchine's 1933 ballet, *Mozartiana*, provided an opportunity to see Berard at full-length for the first time since the

previous Balanchine-Berard ballet, *Cotillon*. Though the better of Berard's two stage-sets for *Mozartiana* was not used because its receding perspectives made the stage of the *Champs Elysées* theatre look too large, the one used was both ingenious and beautiful. The costumes (which fortunately have been carefully preserved and have been seen again in the School of American Ballet's revival of *Mozartiana*) were extremely handsome in their contrasts of white and red, pink and black. Seeing the dancers on the stage, one realized a little more of that curious inner motion which goes on in Berard's paintings themselves, and one knew more of the uncanny echoes of sentiment that even his drawings arouse.

Then, in 1934, two large paintings arrived in America, one a landscape with two figures called *Après Le Nain*, and the other a double self-portrait called *Sur La Plage*, (See plate 6) the latter being, to my mind, one of the most important paintings to be produced thus far by the generation coming after Picasso's. In both paintings there is apparent the same disregard of plastic organization and the same emotional distortion in the positions of the figures in relation to the backgrounds. Each of the two pictures seems at first to be composed of two separate paintings, and in both, the figures and the landscapes are strangely disassociated. Yet both compositions are hauntingly beautiful. The plastic dislocation is altogether deliberate, and breaks down the apparent continuity of the painting only in order to establish a moving and romantic continuity that is entirely personal with Berard.

An apology for the inadequacy of photographic reproductions is usual in art books, but in the case of *Sur La Plage*, it is a downright

necessity. The subtle colors of the sand and the sky, the blue of the front figure's beach-robe contrasting with the yellow-green tones of the second's, cannot possibly be appreciated without being seen. The beach, which looks monotonous in the photograph, holds great interest in the painting. (How this interest is managed is impossible to say.) On the other hand, even a photograph conveys some idea of the skillful modeling, reminiscent of Degas, with which Berard has indicated the contours of the faces. The shape of the flaccid body beneath the robe is, contrarily, suggested without much modeling but with equal sureness. The fine painting of the hands makes one take refuge in the superlatives which, before Cubism, served to describe exquisite craftsmanship.

In contrast to the earlier portrait of Cocteau, (See plate 4) the self-portrait in *Sur La Plage* is completely rendered in paint. Whereas before, Berard had relied on the emotional intensity of his drawing, particularly in the eyes and lips, to give the portrait of Cocteau its peculiar charm, in *Sur La Plage* he has emerged as a pure painter. The mystification, which was arrived at by fairly obvious means in his first pictures, is now achieved by a magic and shocking tension within the painting. The deliberate obscurities of the *Dormeur* are gone, but there are subterfuges in *Sur La Plage* which are all the more mysterious for being concealed.

In a painting like *Sur La Plage*, Berard escapes for once the charge of being a minor painter, a charge which all the Neo-Romantics are bound to face. But in a period when all painters seem minor, compared to the giants of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a consistently high level of quality is what counts. By that

standard, Berard must rank below Eugene Berman, but in his few masterpieces Berard must, it seems to me, rank above all the painters of his generation.

PAVEL TCHELITCHEW was born in Moscow in 1898. When he was little more than twenty, he went to Berlin where his talents were recognized at once. His reputation as a designer of stage *décor* was quickly established, and from 1920 to 1923 he was given important commissions to design scenery and costumes for the opera, the ballet and the theatre. In 1923, he executed his most ambitious early project, the stage sets and the costumes for the *Königgrätzerstrasse Theater*. These sets and costumes were of machine-constructivist inspiration, probably due to the fact that, from 1922 on, the influence of the abstract French and Dutch painters spread rapidly in Germany as in the rest of Europe. Whatever their source, Tchelitchew's Berlin costumes are interesting in view of his later romanticism. For it was to be Tchelitchew and the other Neo-Romantics, combined with the Surrealists, who would turn painting as far as possible away from machine-constructivist aesthetics.

In 1923, Tchelitchew moved to Paris, and his work was included in exhibitions at the Salon d'Automne, at the Galerie Druet and at the Galerie Henry. Around 1925, he was championed by several noted collectors in Paris, among them Gertrude Stein, and shortly afterwards attracted the attention of Edith and Osbert Sitwell in England. He first came into real international prominence when, in 1928, he was commissioned to do the settings for the Diaghilev ballet,

*Ode*. From then on, like so many modern artists employed by Diaghilev, he found a rapidly growing circle of critics and collectors ready to understand and admire his work. He exhibited at a group exhibition at the Balzac Gallery in New York in 1931, and the same year was shown with the other Neo-Romantics at the Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford. In December, 1934, he had a one-man exhibition at the Julien Levy Gallery, New York. In recent years, his paintings have been shown frequently in London.

Tchelitchew is an exception to nearly all generalities about Neo-Romanticism, though he was for a long time the most prominent member of the group. But the development of his painting has many superficial, and perhaps deceptive, parallels with that of the other Neo-Romantics. Like Berard, he first passed through a period of deliberate mystification. The morbid, literary nostalgia to which he, as a Russian, is naturally heir, was expressed by the romantic atmosphere with which he covered and obscured his paintings. In most of his early pictures, he restricted himself to artificially harmonized tones of a deep blue. Less sensual and more of a theorist than Berard, his nostalgia was to a certain extent forced through a process of formalization. It could not be expressed with instinctive ease; it had to be more ambitious, colder, and without the quick emotional release of less intellectual painters. Apart from the fact that he arrived at a mature style of painting sooner than the other Neo-Romantics, his intellectuality made it inevitable that he should be considered the leader of the movement. In reality the least typical painter of the group, he brought to an entirely new kind of painting much of the ordered synthesis that Picasso and his followers had applied

to abstract art. The contrast between his art and theirs was emphasized by their similarity of method. His romanticism, in distinction from that of Berard, seemed more calculated than accidental, and was therefore immeasurably more forceful in theory.

Tchelitchew's early paintings, like Berard's, were a reaffirmation of faith in man as subject-matter. Resuming the traditional problems of presenting the human figure in terms of space and movement, they were the antithesis of Cubism in effect if not in method. The fact that Tchelitchew applied his relatively abstract aesthetic to man instead of to non-representational art, was a measure of the Neo-Romantic revolt against Cubism. Perspective and movement were not merely techniques for the Neo-Romantics, as they had been for many of the Cubists; for Berard, they had an emotional, for Tchelitchew, a metaphysical meaning.

With Tchelitchew, the abstruse meaning of technique resulted in an asceticism which differentiated his early paintings from those of the other Neo-Romantics. While all of them first concerned themselves with man as subject-matter, Tchelitchew portrayed man in terms of metaphysics rather than in terms of emotion. His first years in Paris were spent drawing and painting the figure or head according to anti-geometrical, but none the less complicated, formulas. The stern intellectuality beneath the gloomy atmosphere of these works belied, in part, their apparently simple melancholy. His paintings were much more than sad, and their poignancy was perhaps more illusory than real; compared to Berard's, they had little humanitarian significance. They were not, as they appeared to be, concerned with man's oppression, nor did they, except secondarily, illustrate his nostalgia.

Much as in the prose of a stylist, the style and not the meaning conveys the emotion, Tchelitchew's first paintings were dominated by their technique. Absorbed by the study of perspective, he made, as Picasso had already done, drawings in which several heads or figures were combined in one to suggest new elements of perspective and vision (See plate 7). At the same time, he drew and painted man by means of all kinds of eloquent, but primarily intellectual, distortions. Thus while Berman's figures have a direct and real melancholy (See plate 19) and Berard's have a sharp poignancy (See plate 2) their figures lack the grandeur of Tchelitchew's. This grandeur makes up in part for the coldness of Tchelitchew's figures compared to theirs. It makes necessary, however, a certain amount of rationalization on the part of the observer, which is useless, and even a hindrance, in looking at the pictures of the other Neo-Romantics.

In 1929, Tchelitchew began to extend his palette to include ochres, gray greens and deep reds. The over-emphasized atmosphere of his first paintings was lightened, though he retained their dark and artificial color harmonies. Whether he was impressed by Surrealism or not, he began to dress his figures in the oddments of a poetic imagination. The figures themselves were still derived from Picasso's early periods, but Tchelitchew was completely original in his use of Surrealist bric-a-brac to ornament the costumes of his subjects. His stylized figures were hung with strange hammocks, plaster hands and feet (See plate 8). Curiously enough, their fantasy provided them with a reality that his more representational paintings seldom have. A picture like the *Figure* manages to communicate a sad and moving uneasiness, while a later painting like the *En-*

*terrement du Clown*, (See plate 10) on prolonged observation, turns out to have no human meaning at all. The "Surrealist" paintings of Tchelitchew are, unaccountably, the most haunting and the most moving. In place of being only apparently poetic, they are really so, and their subject-matter seems more deeply felt than it was before or has been since.

In 1929 and 1930, Tchelitchew painted several portraits in which the stylization of the heads, while still derived from Picasso, was noticeably more realistic than before. His color became more varied and clearer in tone. Presently, he turned to ambitious figure pictures like the *Enterrement du Clown*. The influence of Picasso's Rose period is again apparent in the figures and the general composition, but the painting is far from the real and youthful pathos of Picasso's early pictures (See plate 1). As has already been suggested, the *Enterrement du Clown* is not really "about" subject-matter. It is a studio picture from beginning to end, and its figures are imaginary models in costume. We feel an emotional reaction to the deliberate melancholy of the painting, but it is a reaction which is not particularly touched by curiosity about the figures. Contrarily, in even the most stylized of Picasso's Rose period pictures, the figures have a direct emotional appeal of their own. If Tchelitchew's subject-matter seems humanitarian in contrast to Cubism, it nevertheless portrays a primarily intellectual conception, and its pathos is formal rather than real. Thus, Tchelitchew differs in many ways from all the other Neo-Romantics. He is less spontaneous and moving than they, but his colder intellectuality is occasionally rewarded, as in the *Enterrement du Clown*, by a greater force. Unfortunately, the mas-

terly drawing and the fine spacing of the figures are not upheld by the deep reds and gray-blues of this painting. Though it is otherwise an admirable picture, the color has a tendency to look hot and thin.

Tchelitchew's perfection at the most difficult feats of drawing has enabled him to undertake paintings which no one else of his generation could do creditably. Frequently during the period from 1930 to 1933, he painted the end-on figure, a subject which not many modern painters have felt like undertaking. His skill in foreshortening stood him in good stead; the values of weight, scale and perspective were firmly and surely established. More at home with gouache than with oil pigments, Tchelitchew's color lagged behind the distinction of his drawing, but during these years he added deep blacks, new reds and a purer blue to his palette. Though remaining essentially atmospheric, his color became more structural than before, and the closely-knit synthesis of tones in his first pictures gave way to greater contrasts. At the same time, he developed a psychological realism in drawing which was well adapted to his portraits of intimate friends (See plate 9). His usual subject-matter—clowns and acrobats, soldiers and their horses, beggars and women—seemed less isolated and unreal than in the earlier paintings.

In a gouache like *Le Zouave* (See plate 11) the influence of Picasso has almost entirely fallen away, and the less pronounced stylization is more original. The fine volumes of the figure and of the blanket-folds are defined by masterful drawing and by low-key tones of red and blue which have vitality and life of their own. *Le Zouave* is still not a "subject" picture, but it is less artificial than the *Enterrement du Clown*. Unlike the paintings of Berard and Berman,

it marks a return to romantic technique more strongly than it does a return to romantic inspiration, but it is nevertheless an impressive document of the new romanticism.

In June, 1933, Tchelitchew's *décor* and costumes were used for the production in Paris of Georges Balanchine's ballet, *Errante*. The following year, he commenced work on an entirely new series of paintings.

The new paintings consist usually of figures in landscape. His object has been to combine various perspectives within a single picture, and to paint sections of the subject-matter as though each section were observed from a different viewpoint. Thus one figure may be painted as though it were seen from directly above, another as though it were seen straight on. One's eyes, instead of accepting the subject-matter as existing on a single plane, are supposed to glance in and out, around and through the painting. Just as the Renaissance painters finally used three separate planes of action within the picture, so Tchelitchew intends to increase as far as possible the number of planes within his paintings. The color is no longer dark and atmospheric, but extremely bright and full of sharp contrasts. The paintings are held together, theoretically, by ingenious placing and by the contrasts of color which should lead one's eyes from section to section.

There are precedents for the recent Tchelitchew paintings. The distortions of contemporary photography have made familiar even the most grotesque tricks of perspective (See plate 12). The unusual perspective afforded by looking down at objects from skyscrapers and airplanes is now part of common experience. Most im-

portant of all, Picasso in 1923 exploited a wide range of disparate angles of vision in *Au Bord de la Mer* (See plate 13). Yet Tchelitchev has carried the idea farther than his precursors, and his recent painting may conceivably lead to new methods of painting for other artists. In themselves, however, the pictures are far from the exciting promise made for them by the drawings. The color is dry and disagreeable, and has none of the painter's quality which Berard and Berman continually show. Though the complicated perspectives are handled with Tchelitchev's customary sureness, the startling colors add little to continuity. By these paintings, Tchelitchev has proved all over again that his intellectuality, so skillfully translated into drawings, is hardly ever fully realized in paintings. A strange incapacity for color prevents him, more often than not, from arriving at the same mastery with pigment that he exhibits so consistently with pen and ink. But to his few fine paintings, there must be added literally hundreds of first-rate drawings. As a draftsman, he deserves to rank above the other Neo-Romantics and above most contemporary artists as well.

His superiority at drawing has led him to make his sketches finished works of art rather than notes for later paintings. Marking, in a way, the end of his true creative effort, his drawings have carried much of the romanticism which the other Neo-Romantics express through color. His lines are usually held soft and obscured by the careful modeling with which he surrounds them. While Berard habitually covers his hard, clear drawings with atmospheric wash, Tchelitchev creates atmosphere through his modeling of the lines themselves. Nearly every good drawing by him contains, as closely

as a drawing can, the finished forms of his paintings. The romantic void implied by all Neo-Romantic painting is inculcated in Tchelitchev's pen and ink sketches through thumb modeling and elaborate cross hatching. The nostalgia, which somehow seems calculated in most of his paintings, is portrayed with great force in pen and ink. In contrast to the purely linear style of Picasso's well-known neo-classic drawings, Tchelitchev's drawings make their statement through their dramatic qualities of light and shade. As a graphic artist, he is most nearly the equivalent for his generation of what Picasso was for his.

His genius for the theatre is proved beyond doubt by the forceful dramatics of his *décor* for the ballet *Errante*, recently produced with great success in New York. Indeed, the atmosphere of the theatre may be a necessary supplement to Tchelitchev's art, giving a warmth and motion which his paintings lack, and its problems a field for his special ingenuity.

EUGENE BERMAN was born in St. Petersburg in 1899. He came to Paris in 1920, and has lived there ever since except for prolonged journeys to Italy. His first exhibition was held in Paris in 1924, and was composed chiefly of studies for the figure and large heads. Like Berard and Tchelitchev, he felt then that the most drastic statement of romanticism was necessary. He too painted in dark blue, and tried to make his paintings as mysterious as possible. The melancholy of Picasso's Blue period, coupled with the calm pathos of the Rose, furnished Berman with a starting-point as it did the other Neo-Romantics.

Picasso and Chirico were the single painters of the generation before them whom the Neo-Romantics admired profoundly, but there is an important difference between the character of a painter like Picasso and the character of a painter like Berman. It is unimportant to know where Picasso has spent his time, whether in Montmartre, at Dinard, at Nice or at the Rue La Boétie. He is a painter who carries a whole ideology complete in himself, and who draws inspiration from within himself or from the deliberately commonplace. Thus we can believe André Salmon's statement, that the false wood in the Paris kiosks inspired Picasso and Braque to their absorption in surface texture, but we cannot imagine Picasso painting differently in Spain than he would in Paris. On the other hand, it is important to know where a painter like Berman has spent his time, since he has always needed some stimulus outside of the tradition of art before he can paint at all. In romantic painting like Berman's the mood, the hour and the place regain the importance they had in the literature of the Romantic poets.

While Picasso rejected the picturesque as being already over-romanticised, for Berman the romanticism of a place visited is essential. Unlike the Picasso generation, he does not immediately reject the emotional stimulus which comes from looking at what is beautiful in itself; he is not afraid, as they were, of being beguiled. He and all the Neo-Romantics, coming after Cubism's purging of the "pretty" in art, are ready to accept inspiration from anything that touches them emotionally. While Picasso and Braque looked at iron and cheese and at the sides of kiosks, in short at whatever seems insurmountably ugly, Berman looks at Italy. Then, returning home with notebooks

full of drawings, he begins to transform Venice and Padua and Ischia into "props" for a romantic theatre, controlling them quietly and with great intelligence: a magnificent theatre in which color is everything.

It is a theatre, too, in which realism has no part. His is a highly individual way of seeing, and his painting is altered and changed in the studio until not what he has seen, but what he has wanted to see, emerges. His sketches provide a record of his direct emotion when confronted with, for instance, the bay at Ischia, but his paintings are formed by a deep, sensual nostalgia which is habitual with the artist. Unlike Hubert Robert who made documents for a then rising romanticism, Berman is the opposite of a documentary painter. There is no precise exigency in modern life for the haunting romanticism of his *Souvenir d'Ischia* (See plate 18). There is, however, a great need in the dialectic of art for this kind of painting, a need which Berman fills more consistently than any of the other Neo-Romantics.

By 1928, when his serious work began, he had been to Italy, and he had become an original painter. He had been absorbed by the Renaissance masters, particularly by Raphael, and he had seen the remains of Italy itself, the remote villages on the coast, the inland parks and the cities. Returning to Paris with innumerable drawings, he abandoned his studies of the figure for paintings of mysterious sea-side farm buildings. Often these buildings were seen in cross-section, or covered by mysterious draperies, and they were invariably seen in the dark, imaginative light of evening or in moonlight (See plate 15). Because he worked the paintings over and over until

it was time for an exhibition, the pigment became thick and heavy; the colors were so dark that they could be seen only in strong light. Usually they were dominated by a single color, most often by the inevitable blue of the early Neo-Romantics, and they presented the commonplace buildings of Italy as a thoughtful and melancholy image of the painter's emotion. Their romanticism, as well as the light which glanced off their dead forms and gave them life, was strongly literary. Even the titles were intentionally poetic: *The Wrecked*, *Fire at Night*, etc. His aim was to evoke a remembrance of places neglected by painters for many years. His method of doing so was different from Tchelitchew's. While the atmosphere with which Tchelitchew filled his paintings was metaphysical and complicated, Berman's was sensual and nostalgic. Only in the subordinate figures that peopled his buildings did he show Tchelitchew's influence.

The next year, he abandoned the architectural motif temporarily, and devoted himself to painting from the model. Throughout his work there is to be found an alternation between revision of an actual scene and pure invention, but in this year he painted pictures in which not only arrangement, but the subject-matter itself, was largely arbitrary. Figures sleep under great blankets in rooms which are devoid of period and reality; statues in Italy are veiled with robes and near them figures stand uncannily silent; shepherds wait for morning in the midst of unreal snowstorms; boats lie under cover at the foot of buildings out of Mallarmé. The painter's world is muffled with the weight of draperies, and held asleep. In this year, literature reached its highest point of influence with him, nature its lowest.

Berman has painted many interiors, and except for their impractical darkness, they are among his most beautiful pictures (See plate 16). The rooms, which were his own, are furnished with odds and ends, a great cupboard, a simple couch, a worn rug. Their timeless richness comes from the glowing color of the bare walls or of the heavy folds of the cloths which swathe alike the windows and the sleeping figures. The deep perspective of the rooms is clearly derived from the Renaissance masters whom Berman saw in Italy. The objects themselves are barely discernible, but in overhead light their color is of a surprising warmth and depth. Abandoning the uniform blue of his earlier pictures, Berman has turned to deep reds, greens and browns. The light is either the timid light of morning or it is twilight, and its only source is still in literature. The figures are again somewhat reminiscent of Tchelitchev's, but the beginning of a real painter's style is apparent.

In 1930, he returned to Italy and spent much of his time in the seaside towns near Naples. From his drawings, he painted a series of pictures of courtyards which have centers of dramatic excitement in contrast to the calm of the buildings beyond. Compared to the uncommunicative silence of his interiors, these paintings are the nearest Berman has come to commentary. In pictures like *The Wounded* and *Le Bon Samaritain*, (See plate 17) figures bend over a wounded man and horses stand ready to be ridden away. The light on these activities is derived from Rembrandt, and falls from a doorway on the right; there is no other light except the moonlight on the roofs and the dull glow from windows beyond. The painter's melancholy is more active here, and no longer suggests a calm malaise

but a quiet concern. Yet what drama there is in the subject-matter is suspended temporarily, and there is no sense of motion and no need for hurry. Berman never paints something that is happening, but invariably something that has happened. The moment he seizes is the moment of futility, when it is useless to do anything but wait.

Berman began, that same year, to find subject-matter in the stables and obscure corners of the XVth arrondissement where he lived in Paris. Using broad and fairly pure passages of color, he began to lighten his palette and to smooth out the texture of the pigment. With the technical mastery which was coming to him rapidly, he no longer felt the necessity for that romantic overstatement which had characterized his earlier work. In these paintings the subject-matter begins to take on reality, and its romanticism seems less literary and more plausible. The rich greens, browns and grays of the buildings and the figures are framed against an atmospheric background of dark blue.

In 1931, Berman commenced a series of paintings in which the choice of subject-matter was a sign of the long way painting had come since the beginning of the Neo-Romantic movement. He painted the bridges of Paris. One can imagine how the arch-prophets of Cubism, Apollinaire, Uhde, Einstein and others, would have fumed if someone had told them that, in 1931, a good painter would be painting the bridges of Paris and would make them recognizable as such. Italy had been a free choice for Berman because painters had neglected it for so long, but the bridges of Paris suggested a plethora of English etchers and lady water-colorists sitting on the banks of the Seine, bent happily over their tedious smudges. It must have

occurred to Berman that he could scarcely have chosen a more difficult test for the new romanticism.

He began cautiously by painting the bridges at night, using moonlight and the lamps on the bridges for imaginative illumination. The subject-matter, kept vague and unreal, had no locality and might have represented the bridges at Rimini which he had painted earlier. But gradually he began to paint the bridges of Paris as they were in daylight; to alter his vistas to include long stretches of the Seine; even to put in the open sky and clouds that were more real than the symbolical fluffs which Picasso and Chirico had inherited from Rousseau. The light, for the first time, approximated the light of nature. It was still handled arbitrarily and altered to deflect romantic interest, but it followed its source more carefully than before, and it was recognizable as late afternoon light, casting long shadows. The color became lighter, more subtle and more varied. The flatter tones of the earlier paintings gave way to a more complicated synthesis of values. The same malaise and romanticism clung to the bridge pictures, but they had been achieved more naturally, and the atmospheric quality of the paintings had become less pronounced. Even their titles commenced to be descriptive rather than poetic.

After another journey to Italy, Berman began what is in many ways one of his most brilliant periods: from the middle of 1931 to the end of 1932. (He did not, to my mind, reach the same high level of excellence again until 1934.) During his stay in Italy, he had made drawings of scenes in the squares and streets of Venice, Padua, Chioggia, Verona; he had found subject-matter admirable for his purposes along the banks of the Brenta. Moreover, this time he

painted many of the pictures themselves in Italy, and though they remained moderately dark, the clear light of Italy both clarified and expanded his range of colors.

The last months of 1931 were extraordinarily fertile for him, and a large number of paintings exist which are variations on two or three central themes. At Padua, he made sketches for almost a dozen paintings based on views of *Il Prato della Valle* or of the near-by church of *Santa Giustina*. In all of these the premeditated order of his earlier paintings is relaxed somewhat, and a few of them, notably his paintings of the statues in the *Prato della Valle*, are painted with an almost feverish intensity. Subject-matter, as well as composition, looks less calculated in these newer paintings, and the painting in all of them is much freer. His romanticism is now a painter's romanticism, formed by subtle tones rather than by the deliberate obscurities of his first work.

He began, during this period, to feel strongly the influence of Corot's early Italian period and to use Corot's clear colors and solid construction. In the many versions of *Prato della Valle* and the church of *Santa Giustina*, he arrived at a bolder statement of modeling, and he used freely the strong effects of sunlight which Corot had taught him. In the paintings of Venice done at the same time, the glowing light of sunset over the lagunes and the warm light of late afternoon falling down the steps of the market-places were employed alternately. Despite his occasional difficulty in holding the light colors of his figures' costumes—the bright purples, greens and browns—in place, it was apparent that Berman had arrived at maturity as a painter.

To attest this fact, he painted during the latter part of 1931 and during 1932 at least five pictures which, in their manner, are finished and complete masterpieces. Two of these are of the same subject: the bay at Ischia, seen from a high point in the foreground (See plate 18). Both were painted from his sketches made on an early trip to Italy; the first in 1931, the second in 1932. In both paintings the many difficult levels of perspectives are perfectly controlled, and the whole composition skillfully balanced and contained. While the first version is still moderately dark in color, the second, with its strong passages of pink and green, is a proof of Berman's surety with the lighter palette to which he has turned increasingly. In the second version, the restrained unreal tonality of Berman's earlier work is replaced by a sensuous quality of pure color, while the texture itself has become more varied, and lost all deliberate suppression of accents and contrasts. Both versions may be seen easily in moderate light, and neither one stresses a mysterious isolation from ordinary life as strongly as the first Berman's did.

From this period, too, dates the magnificent *Jeune Homme Couché* (See plate 19). A large painting, this was perhaps his first wholly ambitious work, a long premeditated masterpiece from which he could take direction and which he could regard as the summary of his first years. Far bolder than anything he had done before, it was to be a test of how much progress he had made as a painter. In this, Berman's first attempt to push his strength, there is no overstatement but the mastery of an artist who has arrived at complete confidence.

One's eyes do not search for the figure in this painting; it is clear and light in color, painted in rich olives, reds, pinks and whites.

It has, besides, an extraordinary quality of sheer painting, a warmth in the pigment itself which makes one want to touch rather than applaud the painting. Tchelitchew has at times handled a single reclining figure with impeccable drawing, (See plate 11) but there is no picture of his which can compare in finished painting with this picture by Berman. But then, Tchelitchew has never attempted a picture in which physical sensation plays so important a part. In *Jeune Homme Couché*, the weight of the blanket and the shape of the figure are suggested not by lines, but by the deep modeling of tones, giving an unintellectual validity to the folds of the blanket and to the outline of the figure reclining. In this painting, Berman proved to himself that he had outgrown the morbid pathos of his first, dark pictures and that he could now afford to be both elegiac and clear. He discovered that his highly individual nostalgia could be expressed more conventionally, and with more grandeur, without losing in sentimentality the poignancy of its sentiment.

Returning to scenes from Venice and to landscape along the Brenta, Berman availed himself of his new skill with the bright tones of the *Jeune Homme Couché*. Though he occasionally fell back for assurance on the half-light of the earlier landscapes, as he did in a fine *Soir sur la Brenta*, for the most part his paintings were imbued with a new and lyric clarity. Particularly in the figures which walked or sprawled on the squares of Venice, he commenced to use contrasting pastel colors: light greens, blues, grays and browns. Whether or not at this period he had come to admire Veronese and Tiepolo, a distinctly Venetian richness was apparent in his palette, and at the same time his figures and buildings showed a new strength

and forcefulness (See plate 20). The figures themselves were modeled more carefully and had ceased to be merely decorative; their sculptured forms commenced now to add movement and life to the canvases.

At St. Cloud, Berman painted a series of pictures in which the subtle variations and range of his color were expanded still further. Above all, in the extremely beautiful *Statues dans un Parc* (See plate 21) he painted a landscape which for sheer richness of coloring has few equals in recent painting. In this picture he repeated a compositional formula at which he had grown skillful: the landscape is seen in long perspective, so that the painting is nearly all foreground with a short expanse of sky beyond. In this kind of composition, which parallels Tchelitchev's experiments with the end-on figure, everything depends on absolute mastery with the scale of perspective. That Berman has been equal to the task is proved by the restful ease of the *Statues dans un Parc*.

In 1933, Berman spent much of his time at Versailles, and became fascinated by the romantic group sculptures in the gardens. He painted a series of landscapes and filled them with imaginative reconstructions of *Apollo and Daphne* and other sculptures. In these paintings there is evident an entirely new influence in Berman's work, the influence of the Surrealist, Salvador Dali. First of all, the landscapes themselves are curiously reminiscent of the uncanny landscapes against which Dali scatters the symbols of his obsessions (See plate 22). Berman's landscapes, like Dali's, stretch away to infinity, and he has bounded them on the sides with the realistic paste-brown cliffs which Dali uses. Then the sculptures themselves,

which have heretofore been melancholic and calm in Berman's paintings, begin to writhe and twist with a new intensity in the Apollo and Daphne series. One of the series is called significantly *The Mutilated Statue*, and is tinged, however faintly, with a paranoiac sharpness. In all these paintings, he has substituted a more distraught emotion for the sombre quiet of his previous works.

Saying all this, one must still say that Berman is far in purpose from Surrealism. The romanticism which he has borrowed from Dali is a romanticism of technique rather than of spirit. It is his admiration for Dali's technique which has led him to paint the statues of Apollo and Daphne with an almost gruesome liveliness against the dead silence of the landscape. Perhaps it is his admiration for Dali's technique that has led him to abandon the smooth, lovely passages of color of the St. Cloud paintings for an artificial synthesis of tones. Whatever the reason, the latter change has not been a happy one. The almost impressionistic stippling of colors in the Apollo and Daphne pictures has made them muddy and deprived them, except in isolated passages, of the rich warmth of the St. Cloud series. Only one or two of the newer paintings are near in quality to his previous work, and in none of them is the full strength of his skill apparent. To an elegiac painter like Berman, the queer intensities of Dali's paranoiac vision are inevitably out of character. The charm and the strength of Berman's romanticism rest on the same stillness and acceptance which characterized seventeenth-century landscapes, and which was later revived by Corot. The Surrealists, on the other hand, romanticize irritation. (A typical Surrealist *jeu* was their desire to cut the *Panthéon* in two and reconstruct the halves an inch apart. One's first

reaction before even Chirico's *Souvenir d'Italie* (See plate 36) is to want to disturb the silence.) Their shrill accents are completely alien to Berman's quiet nostalgia.

Returning from a trip to Avignon, Berman commenced, later in 1933, a new series of landscapes in which he recaptured the subtle and rich color of his early works, though he painted in a much lighter key. The sunlight in these landscapes is the light of midday, and it falls on countless rocks which suggest in their shapes the odd bone formations which Dali has used in his paintings. Particularly the bent rock in the middle of one of Berman's landscapes (See plate 23) suggests the shape of an amorphous monster in Dali's painting (See plate 57). Yet here the parallel ends, and Berman has returned to the easeful compositions of his earlier periods. If he disturbs the static and non-committal calm of the newer landscapes, he does so only slightly, through the leaning shapes of the great rocks in the backgrounds. The vaguely supernatural statues of Apollo and Daphne have been replaced by the figures of peasants, painted now with the lightest shades of blue and yellow and green. The stippled mat surface of the Versailles landscapes has disappeared; in these newer paintings the brushwork is fluid and sure.

The following year, he arrived at the same mastery with light color which formerly, in paintings like the first *Souvenir d'Ischia*, he had shown with dark. The extraordinary freshness and ease of several of these recent pictures, as well as their structural resilience and depth, place them, to my mind, among Berman's finest pictures. Only occasionally in these late 1934 paintings has he fallen dangerously near to prettiness. But Berman, like all the Neo-Romantics, is

continually on guard against the pitfalls of sentimentality, and knows how to keep clear of what is merely handsome. One need not worry that he will often push sentiment too far, and meanwhile his experiments with brilliant colors have gained him several masterpieces as against a like number of failures, a high percentage for any artist. Particularly impressive among this group of paintings is *La Cruche sur la Fenêtre* (See plate 24) in which he has sought to combine the landscape with still-life. The extreme simplicity of the figures through the doorway to the right, the ingenious device of the green shutters framing the landscape beyond, make this composition both satisfying and agreeable.

When a painter can progress in five years from the literary mysticism of Berman's first Italian pictures to the finished romanticism of *La Cruche sur la Fenêtre*, there is no need for despair about the state of post-cubist painting. Berman's development has come naturally, unattended by the cerebral revolutions of the Picasso generation. It has come steadily and surely, and left more than a score of absolutely first-rate paintings in its wake. Those who have feared that Neo-Romanticism would end in a cul-de-sac should be reassured by Eugene Berman's quiet intelligence and resourcefulness. He is a minor painter if you like, but he is a minor painter in the best sense of the word; the kind of minor painter who may, years later, pass in esteem the more ambitious painters of his generation. The fine painter's quality in his canvases can hardly be neglected for long. In all probability it will be painters who will some day rediscover him first.

KRISTIANS TONNY, the youngest of the Neo-Romantics, was born in Paris, in 1906, of Dutch parents. Before he was twenty, he had become widely known for the finished and refreshing quality of his drawings. In their way, these drawings were superior to any art produced by the Neo-Romantics before 1928, and they were acquired by many of the discriminating supporters of modern art, among them the Americans, Gertrude Stein and Carl Van Vechten. His drawings did not hold great speculative promise, as did the paintings of Berard, and Berman; within their limits they were complete, even if secondary, masterpieces.

Tonny's drawings seem to have been affected only slightly by the fact that he was living in Paris. In all essentials, they continued the Netherlandish tradition for extravagant fantasy laid down by Bosch and the elder Breughel. Like the paintings of Bosch and Breughel, they were as Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Jr., described them, "composed solely by a sort of subconscious scenario and by no geometrical principles of design".<sup>1</sup> The world described by Tonny's scenarios was a medieval world, bewitched by sinister emblems and symbols of the Black Sabbath and full of phalli and miniature eroticisms. The subject-matter consisted of boats laden with supernatural cargo (See plate 25); later of medieval warriors and their stallion horses, monks and jugglers, banners and shields, monkeys and those nameless beasties that crawl through the paintings of Bosch and Breughel. No attempt was made to relate these figures by composition, but a certain unity and order were arrived at through the supple-

<sup>1</sup> Catalogue for the exhibition of Tonny, Tchelitchev, Berard, Berman, Leonide: *Wadsworth Atheneum*, 1931.

ness and motion of Tonny's drawing. The continuity was haphazard, and depended entirely on the interest aroused by his humorous and fantastic imagination. In a different form, Tonny's scenarios, unwinding rapidly, provided the endless surprises of Disney's animated cartoons.

The subconscious spontaneity of the drawings is partly a result of the method by which they are produced. Tonny, like all Neo-Romantics, has done a good deal of experimenting with technique. To digress briefly, the Neo-Romantics, who by the definition of the term that describes them, should be careless and impatient with technical means, instead have been painstaking and scholarly. Just as the Pre-Raphaelites were forever experimenting with pigments and materials, so the Neo-Romantics have been unwilling to accept traditional theories as to technical methods. Contrarily, the generation before them was so intent on creating art out of commonplace materials—newspaper, cheese, false wood, sandpaper, etc., that they paid little attention to the physical problems of technique. (It is not uncommon to see early paintings by Picasso and Braque in shocking condition: how long the *papiers collés* can possibly last is a serious question.) But part of the romantic philosophy is that romanticism will endure, and the Neo-Romantics have been precautionary and experimental at the same time. While Berman, Berard and Tchelitchev were testing the merits of composition boards, old canvases, panels and other supports, Tonny was perfecting the process of transfer by which most of his drawings have been made.

Because the transfer process has had a good deal to do with the spontaneity of Tonny's drawings, a description of the process seems

valuable. It is as follows: A piece of paper is coated with oil pigment in one or more broad areas of color (often white, or gold and white. in Tonny's work). The coated paper is treated and dried until the pigment has reached the right consistency. It is then placed, coated side down, on another piece of paper which may be of any color, but with Tonny is often black. The artist now draws with a stylus on the back of the first piece of paper, and the pressure of the stylus transfers the image from the coated side of the first paper onto the second.

Two very important things happen to a drawing made through this technique. First, the broad lines impressed by the stylus have a dramatic quality which may be altered and shaded by manipulation of the stylus itself. Second, the drawing must be made nearly "in the blind", since only the light traces of the stylus show on the drawing side of the first paper. Both these peculiarities of the technique have been an advantage to Tonny. The reverse-silhouetted effect of the transfer lines gives them an emphasis which would be lacking in pencil or ink drawing. Avoiding the hard-bitten appearance of etchings and the clumsy massing of wood-blocks, the transfer process gives drawings a dramatic quality that in Tonny's case increases the fantasy of his subject-matter. Then, the freshness of Tonny's imagination is heightened by the fact that, drawing nearly "in the blind", there is no plainly visible record to interrupt the easy flow of his subconscious mind.

Thus in his way, Tonny practises an automatism as do the Surrealists, but it is a different kind of automatism, and perhaps a more plausible one. The ghoulish paraphernalia of the Surrealists *séances* are far from Tonny's nature, and consequently he escapes Cocteau's

charge against the Surrealists, that they try to make their way into the dream through burglary. Rather than through burglary, Tonny makes his way into the subconscious easily and graciously, without fanfare and conscious yoga. He draws his fantastic and witty scenarios from the subconscious mind simply and unaffectedly, much as did his precursors, Bosch and the elder Breughel.

Around 1931, he went to Morocco and made a series of transfer drawings dealing with a real, rather than an imaginary, exotic world. The romantic-realism of the subject-matter which he portrayed, figures in Moroccan costume and the houses of Tangiers, destroyed unaccountably the vitality and movement which had contributed so much to his earlier transfers. The same skillful drawing is apparent, but it has become stiff and motionless. For another thing, he tried more consciously to maintain a plastic composition, and sacrificed in the process all the animation of the medieval scenarios. More than one Northern artist before him has lost his sense of robust fantasy in the South, and there is perhaps a good enough reason for this. The Southern mind repels from and accepts reality at the same time, so that Southern artists have known how to effect in art a harmonious, and often brilliant, compromise between realism and pure fantasy. On the other hand, the Northern artist almost invariably clings to a sharp realism or escapes altogether through pure hallucinations. Certainly Tonny's Netherlandish imagination was dulled by the overpowering romanticism of Moroccan subject-matter. Faced with existing fantasy, there was nothing left for him but realism. As an artist, he could perhaps have invented more spontaneous subject-matter amid the comparative bleakness of the Netherlands.

The alternate tradition of realism which Tonny, as a Dutch artist, had inherited was nevertheless responsible for the most important paintings which he has produced. (It may be that he has become an accomplished painter within the last few years, but the pictures under discussion were certainly the most valuable to appear before 1931.) These paintings were portraits of friends, and were painted after long and acute observation. In method, but not in kind, they paralleled the 1920 portraits of Miró. But while Miró's realism was Spanish, bright and unpsychological, Tonny's was sharp and more exact. His portraits of Gertrude Stein and other friends were Northern portraits, precise, rather than filled with sentiment as Berard's were. Instead of portraying a mood and giving an illusion of emotional tension, Tonny's portraits communicated dispassionately the exact appearances of his subjects. The long observation, which made them possible, was essentially detached and unsentimental.

These portraits constitute the best rebuttal to the usual argument, that his paintings are for the most part weakened versions of his drawings. There are, however, some early paintings of his which have qualities of their own apart from the fantasy borrowed from the transfers. In *Figures* (See plate 26) the soft and lovely colors of the animals painted against a deep red background, make up in some degree for the ~~puerility~~ of the symbolical moon and goat portrayed below. The strong shading of the full-length figure is impressive, and the group of heads at the top, representing the five Neo-Romantics, is an interesting document of early Neo-Romanticism. The finely painted self-portrait in the center of the group is not unlike later heads by Salvador Dali; it is interesting as well to note

Tonny's early use of the Surrealist "double-image": in *Figures* he has painted a replica of Picasso's well-known *Boy with Flowers* and made the boy's cap turn into a wolf.

As a general rule, however, Tonny was content before 1931 to draw, in crayon or gouache, enlarged versions of his transfers. Almost always he first prepared the canvas or board with a deep atmospheric patina in gold-brown, black, blue or gray. He made no attempt to do more than fill in the heavy outlines of the drawn images with dramatic shading or with atmospheric color. Modeling was achieved through this surface shading, much as it is achieved in Tchelitchew's drawings. But the atmosphere in Tonny's paintings was applied on top of the images rather than made an integral part of shading as it is in Tchelitchew's graphic art.

In his paintings, Tonny's fantasy has a tendency to become static and to lose that quick wit which makes his transfers amusing as well as handsome. Except for his portraits he is, for those who share Miss Stein's belief that only oil paintings hold the attention, an inconsiderable artist. Yet his transfer drawings are comparable in quality to the work, in any medium, of any artist his age. Even now he is no older than the other Neo-Romantics were when they began to produce important work. There is some justification, therefore, for taking the word of critics who saw his recent exhibition in Paris, that he has made progress and that he may some day handle paintings with the same inspired facility he has always shown for drawings.

LEONIDE, the older brother of Eugene Berman, was born in Lenin-grad in 1896. He studied painting in Russia until he moved to Paris with his family around 1920. He then studied, like Berard, under Vuillard and Maurice Denis at the Académie Ranson. His paintings were exhibited at the Galerie Pierre in 1926, at the Galerie Druet in 1928, at the Joet Gallery in London in 1929, at the Galerie Mantau in Brussels in 1929, and at the Galerie Bonjean, Paris, in 1930. A one-man exhibition was held at the Julien Levy Gallery, New York, in 1935.

Instead of going to Italy in search of romantic subject-matter, as his brother did, Leonide went north to the sea-coast villages of Normandy. There he experimented with a variety of techniques. He made a series of transfer drawings of boats and their rigging, paying scholarly attention to detail. His first paintings were not Neo-Romantic at all, and their pale impressionistic colors showed plainly the influence of his teachers at the Académie Ranson. Presently, perhaps through his brother's influence, he arrived at the inevitable early Neo-Romantic mystification. He darkened and restricted his palette to the monochrome atmosphere of the other Neo-Romantics, and he obscured his subject-matter by covering his canvases with successive layers of heavy paint. But the strenuous artificiality of a Tchelitchew was unnatural to Leonide; by 1929, rich sensual colors began to show through his atmosphere: soft blues, deep reds and greens.

His subject-matter was in itself as commonplace as the actual interiors painted by his brother, but he converted the merely picturesque scenes of the Norman coast into paintings that were mysterious, alien and alive. He painted the fisherwomen of Normandy,

with their baskets and great nets, against flat backgrounds of green or blue (See plate 27) or against long perspectives of shore and beach and sea. Like all the Neo-Romantics, his admiration for Chirico was profound, for in Chirico's early paintings the meditative pathos of the Neo-Romantics was present in addition to the dream-world imagery of the Surrealists. Leonide's use of far perspective must at first have been derived from Chirico; of the Neo-Romantics, only Berard seems not to have borrowed this romantic device.

When, in these early pictures, Leonide replaced the solid atmospheric backgrounds by landscapes, the landscapes were still subordinate to the figures. The melancholia which clung to the pictures was communicated by the figures of the fishermen and women whose nets were transformed into mysterious and unfamiliar props of romanticism. But the sense of oppression which surrounded these figures was abstract and literary rather than actual. Leonide was far from the romantic-realism of a Millet, and his figures walked and stooped and carried their baskets within an isolated literary void, sunless but glowing with sombre highlights and rich color. What they did and were was of little humanitarian importance compared to the specific atmosphere of which they were part.

From the beginning, Leonide showed an ease and lack of formal arrangement that distinguished his work from Berman's, and gave it its own particular charm. Not as serious a painter as his brother, and certainly not as good a one, his paintings had, nevertheless, a spontaneity to compensate for their smaller scale. They had, besides, a sumptuousness of color and texture which accentuated their look of impulsiveness. The deep and almost physical modeling which de-

finer the figures made their positions and gestures important to the composition, whereas Berman's figures at this period were flatter and arranged decoratively.

In 1930, Leonide lightened the whole tone of his paintings, and commenced to use brighter blues, reds, greens, and a particularly lovely Venetian white. He abandoned solid backgrounds altogether for new and more complex perspectives of cliffs and sea. The landscape began to interest him for its own sake. Just as the other Neo-Romantics were doing, Leonide worked away from the artificial romanticism of his 1929 paintings, and became interested in a more natural and less forced style. Whereas the light in his early paintings had, like the light in Berman's, been derived from literature and had been without definite source, by 1930 it was recognizably sunlight. In place of the over-all dim illumination used in the studies of fisherwomen, the afternoon light fell over the fields near the sea, and long shadows stretched away from the Norman cliffs.

By 1931 he, like Berman, had given up the tenebrous mystification which had so firmly isolated his beach scenes from reality. Just as the rediscovery of Degas' early portraits provided Berard with a new impetus at this time, so the new and general admiration for Corot's earlier work was responsible for Leonide's return to nature. He may also have come, with Berard and Berman, to admire the landscapes of the brothers Le Nain, and his own 1931 landscapes were suddenly free of the morbid and exacting romanticism of his early work. The importance of his figures was reversed, and became decorative rather than structural; he scattered them as mere points of interest along the endless fields of the Normandy farms (See plate 28).

More obviously a good painter than a highly individual one, Leonide sacrificed some of his particular charm in the return to comparative reality. But in recompense, the newer landscapes are ingenious in composition. The romanticized lines of the roads and furrows lead agreeably to the far horizons, which are skillfully fixed and lent interest by the masts of passing boats. The long perspectives are accentuated by the vertical lines of the furrows rather than by the scaling down of figures so often practised by Chirico and Dali. Leonide shares with Dali, however, the trick of pointing all emphasis towards relatively miniature objects in the paintings, (In plate 28 the masts of the boats) and creates the same element of surprise that these objects should be there at all.

The color of the 1931 paintings is light, and the obscurities, in both texture and palette, of the early pictures have disappeared. Like Berman, Leonide reserves his most subtle and rich passages of color for the figures that people his landscapes. The landscapes themselves are painted in warm grays, browns and blues. He has always had an aptitude for making his skies hold their own against the full foregrounds, and his clouds are painted with a reverence and a freshness that is uncommon in modern art. With the increasing return to nature, he has come to depend on actualities to define the mood and the hour of his pictures. Thus the sky and the light, even the wane of the tide, have taken on a new and lyric importance. He uses them now as romantic props in place of the more theatrical technics that upheld the unchanging atmosphere of his early paintings.

From 1932 to 1934, little was heard of Leonide. It was rumored that he had given up painting temporarily, and few of his pictures

were to be seen in Paris. That he must have been painting some of the time, at least, is proved by the technical superiority of his 1934 landscapes. Certainly he must have been busy in 1934, for the series of new pictures is large and contains work as fine as anything he has done. Though the canvases are bigger than formerly, the scale of both figures and objects in the landscapes has diminished considerably (See plate 29). Whether or not this interest in miniature scale was derived from Dali, it is impossible to say; it might have come from Boudin. Yet the hypnotic influence of Dali's technique has already been noted in the chapter on Eugene Berman; there is no reason to think that Leonide was not equally impressed by the extraordinary precision of Dali's romanticism.

Nothing else in Leonide's most recent paintings is suggestive of Surrealism. The far perspective is stressed less than it was before, and the new pictures are for the most part composed horizontally rather than vertically. The clear gray-brown tones of the long stretches of beach, the vast blue expanses of sea, exaggerate the miniature size of the figures. In themselves these broad areas of beach and sea are given interest by changes in texture and by the varied patterns left by the tide. Composition in these paintings is restful and contained. Their most obvious weakness is a tendency towards mildness, and a few of them waver between distinction and mere competent painting. The best of them, however, have a freshness and ease not often to be found in Tchelitchew and Berman. The positions of the figures and of the long fishing nets seem accidental and haphazard. The pictures, like Boudin's, may have been painted from nature at a single sitting; the formal synthesis so apparent in Tchelitchew,

and felt occasionally in Berman, is conspicuously absent.

The nineteenth century has taught us an unfortunate disrespect for minor painters, mainly because nineteenth century painters were either great artists or they were very poor ones indeed. It may be, however, that from now on the twentieth century will produce only minor painters, just as the eighteenth century did. This does not mean that these painters will not be of lasting importance. On the contrary, a painter like Leonide may be considered of greater value as time goes on.

# LITERARY ASPECTS OF SURREALISM

SURREALISM has been primarily a literary movement. For the most part, the official Surrealist artists have simply tried to express in another medium the aims, purposes and methods of the literary men who have dominated the movement from the beginning. The purpose of the Surrealist *collage*,<sup>1</sup> for instance, is best explained in terms of the attempts at word-dislocation which preceded it. The history of Surrealist literature is, therefore, the most relevant thing to know about Surrealist art.

( Surrealism was born in Paris in 1924. In December of that year, the first issue of the magazine *La Révolution Surréaliste* appeared, and proclaimed that "the dream alone leaves man his rights to liberty". The editors, Pierre Naville and Benjamin Peret, did not commit themselves to a definite program for the movement, but it was obvious that Surrealism stood for a systematic exploration of the subconscious mind. The influence of Freud, felt belatedly in France, was at its height in the decade that produced Surrealism, and suggested to writers an integral subject-matter that had been largely ignored by modern literature. In place of using psychology to illuminate human conduct and reason, the Surrealists decided that the wellsprings of Freudian psychology—the subconscious mind,

<sup>1</sup> For a definition of this term, see note on page 80.

repressed desires, the imagery of dreams—were in themselves worth exploiting. The contributors to *La Révolution Surréaliste*, in prose that recalls romantic literature of a hundred years before, described their dreams, and gave the results of their attempts at plumbing the subconscious. Thus despite the assertions of aestheticians within the movement, the central purpose of Surrealism until around 1930 was to find a method of poetry which could utilize the new romanticism of the dream for the dream's sake. In trying to do so, it was inevitable that the Surrealists should break with the means of expression that had been accepted theretofore.

(According to S. Putnam, the Surrealist revolt against tradition was brought to a head by the funeral of Anatole France and the attendant popular acclaim for him as the outstanding genius of modern literature.<sup>2</sup> To show their contempt for France's gilded style, his hollow scepticism and his baseless popularity, a group of young writers staged a mock funeral at which every possible abuse was heaped on France's effigy. To them he represented the vacuity of modern thought, the twentieth century's smug omniscience and emotional sterility. More specifically, he represented French bourgeois reason and the dead catholicity of taste in Paris. The mock funeral staged by these writers, most of whom became Surrealists, announced their revolt from the two main pillars of French thought: categorical knowledge and the faith of the Church. [Thus the Surrealist movement was, in a way, born from an irritated snobbery.] Yet not a few of the major accomplishments of this century have resulted from the same sort of reaction. There has never before been so large and com-

<sup>2</sup> *The European Caravan*, New York, 1931.

placent a well-informed audience against which genius and even talent have had to fight their way.

The Surrealist revolt against reason was largely inherited from the Dada movement which had been formed at Zurich in 1916. Dada had been what its name implied, a negation of art, literature, action, even life. Partly the movement was due to a natural disgust with aesthetics which, as we shall see, had been growing rapidly at the time. To this was added the sensitive man's feeling of helplessness before the chaos of war. With the pompous oratory of statesmen booming over Europe, with the scandals of capitalism breaking through propaganda and bringing disillusionment, with talented writers and artists falling every day, it was no wonder that the intellectuals who were escaping the war should distrust the value of art as of everything else. By proclaiming the uselessness of action, they were able at least to share the futility of those who were dying in the war. It was inevitable, at such a time, that artists should judge themselves in terms of action. And since the only action possible was war, life as well as art became preposterous.

(Among the original Dadaists were Hans Arp, Richard Huelsenbeck, Hugo Ball, and Tristan Tzara.) Under Tzara's guidance, Dada manifestoes followed each other in surprising number, and the motives of the movement became well-enough defined: Dada was entirely an art of protest. The literary objective was to tear down reason and to set up a feigned madness. Mass meetings were held at which poets recited verse to the accompaniment of deafening music. Poems were made by picking words out of a hat; bewildered members of the audiences were successively chosen chairmen. At these meetings an un-

believable pandemonium reigned, an expression of the Dada nihilism. Yet this nihilism was very often relieved by inspired wit and nonsense, and frequently resulted in authentic, if unorthodox, poetry. At bottom, however, the disbelief of even the founders was real, and their laughter was as hysterical as that of outsiders. Suicide remained the only solution to a life that was not worth living, but because it was a logical solution, it was for the Dadaists an impossible one.

The end of Dada was as strange as its beginning. It died of cheerfulness in 1920. Its members vied with each other in deriding the movement for its outmoded despair. In Germany, where the movement had always been regarded confusedly as a protest against political rather than aesthetic tyranny, Dada passed on to an active participation in Communism.<sup>3</sup> In Paris, whither most of the original Dadaists had migrated from Zurich, the movement slumbered for four years until the appearance of *La Révolution Surréaliste*.

But even after the demise of Dada, the revolt against reason continued. In literature outside of France, D. H. Lawrence became the prophet of a return to instinct. Ernest Hemingway's excessive use, in novels, of the adjective "fine" was a shorthand description of disgust with the processes of thought. A sentimentality towards primitive life was general, and both writers and artists envied the minds of savages and the eyes of children. (The depressing complexity of modern life made escape, imaginary or real, a necessity for nearly all artists.

Yet the cheerfulness of which Dada died was not without founda-

<sup>3</sup> See "L'esprit Dada dans la Peinture, Berlin 1918-1922", by Georges Hugnet, *Cahiers d'Art*, Nos. 6-7, 1932, page 281.

tion. By 1924, the period which had produced Dada was giving way to a more hopeful era, and the chaos of the post-war world was being replaced by a growing stability of faith. A romanticism, previously absorbed by the war, was beginning to flourish unashamed, but there were few mediums for its expression. From 1920 to 1924, many writers and a few painters had tried those traditional outlets for romanticism: travel and exploration. Described by Samuel Putnam as belonging to the "Jules Verne Interlude",<sup>4</sup> they were motivated by a philosophical respect for the machine, which was then pervading the arts. The mechanical improvements of the post-war period made it possible to see the world differently because one could see it more quickly. The Futurists' interest in rapidly changing points of focus was translated into action, and for several years writers tried to convey the illusion of speed by recording their impressions as quickly as they traveled.

Whatever the inherent merits of the "Interlude", it was important as suggesting an alternative to the dream world that the Surrealists chose to explore. (The Surrealists' choice was hurried by the century's infinite capacity for vulgarization) Not only did the radio and moving pictures usurp territory once held sacred to writers and painters, but the exotic world itself moved to Paris. It had been moving there for some time, of course, but by the latter part of the third decade Miss Josephine Baker's girdle of bananas was triumph supreme, and Zulus purveyed their native cooking next door to Chinese *bistros*. What had been an authentic romanticism in the nineteenth century, became a matter of pose and costume in the twentieth.

<sup>4</sup> *The European Caravan*, New York, 1931.

Only the dream remained relatively unexplored. In proclaiming that "the dream alone leaves man his rights to liberty", the Surrealists announced that they had found a new and constructive romanticism to replace the nihilism of Dada. The contempt of the Dadaists for aesthetics and reason was carried over into Surrealism, but the Surrealists substituted a faith in counter-reason for the complete disbelief of the Dadaists. Most of the Surrealists had once been Dadaists, among them: André Breton, Louis Aragon, Benjamin Peret, Paul Eluard, Roger Vitrac, Boiffard, Robert Desnos, Pierre Reverdy, Philippe Soupault, Joseph Delteil, and others. Remembering the uncannily beautiful word associations that had resulted from their haphazard methods of creating Dadaist poetry, they retained faith in the ability of the subconscious to replace *clichés* with startling and poetic images. They accepted, as Surrealists, the premise that the human brain is, like an iceberg, four-fifths submerged and out of sight. And since the visible part of the brain had been responsible for stupid actions (the war) and for what they considered stupid reasoning, (Jean Cocteau's Neo-Thomist conversion, for instance) it followed that the submerged brain, being not guilty, was far superior. In any case, the submerged brain was open to more original exploitation than the conscious mind; it provided the Surrealists with "a metaphysical assurance", a basis for concerted activity which has made Surrealism the most forceful tendency in very recent aesthetics.

The Surrealists defined their new faith as a belief "in the future resolution of those two seemingly contradictory states, dream and reality, into a sort of absolute reality, a *surrealité* if it may so be

called".<sup>5</sup> But in this declaration, the word "future" had an Utopian meaning, and the first years of Surrealism were devoted to releasing the dream so that some distant day the resolution of dream and reality might take place. The immediate problem was to break down the walls of reason which shielded the dream, and to expose the dream as an entity. Though the Surrealists professed interest in the work of the contemporaneous British spiritualists, their own objective was the opposite of both spiritualism and nineteenth century dream interpretation, since they wanted to free an integral counter-logic rather than to extend the borders of the logical mind.

The Surrealists believed, to paraphrase André Breton's words, that the subconscious mind was continually trying to communicate its meaning. But the conscious mind interfered so persistently that this meaning was lost or altered beyond recognition. It was necessary, therefore, to seal the conscious mind in a vacuum so that the message could be heard, a process which came to be known as automatism. (As early as 1921, Breton and Philippe Soupault had published a book of automatic writing, *Les Champs Magnétiques*.) The Surrealists' methods of practising automatism included writing poems and prose while the conscious mind was being distracted as much as possible, and *séances* at which all manner of infernal machines were utilized to wring poetry out of the subconscious mind. Because language seemed the first mode of expression to revitalize,<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> André Breton, *Manifeste du Surréalisme*, new edition, Kra, Paris, 1929.

<sup>6</sup> "There is a pretence that it has not been noticed how much the logical mechanism of the sentence is proving more and more impotent by itself to give man the emotive shock which really gives some value to his life." André Breton, *This Quarter*, Surrealist Number, 1932. (Hereafter referred to as *This Quarter*.)

most of the early Surrealist experiments were confined to literature. Salvador Dali's description of these experiments will give some idea of how they were conducted.

"All night long a few Surrealists would gather around the big table used for experiments, their eyes protected and masked by thin though opaque mechanical slats on which the blinding curve of the convulsive graphs would appear intermittently in fleeting luminous signals, a delicate nickel apparatus like an astrolabe being fixed to their necks and fitted with animal membranes to record by interpenetration the apparition of each fresh poetic streak, their bodies being bound to their chairs by an ingenious system of straps, so that they could only move a hand in a certain way and the sinuous line was allowed to inscribe the appropriate white cylinders. Meanwhile their friends, holding their breath and biting their lower lips in concentrated attention, would lean over the recording apparatus and with dilated pupils await the expected but unknown movement, sentence or image".<sup>7</sup>

However subject to ridicule this spooky scene might be, there was at least a negative justification for experiments of this kind. The Surrealists pointed out that not only words, but objects, had lost meaning through their inevitable occurrence in specified relations to each other; they no longer evoked a variety of images, but were accepted stupidly as themselves.<sup>8</sup> In philosophy, the necessity for

<sup>7</sup> *This Quarter*, page 198.

<sup>8</sup> To paraphrase Breton's words, it is necessary to make a vertical descent within ourselves to light up the obscure and hidden places of the mind in order that we may distinguish an animal from a flame or a stone. See *Second Manifeste du Surréalisme*, Kra, Paris, 1930, page 23.

a break-down of worn associations had been suggested by Engels: "The decomposition of nature into its integral parts, the separation of different phenomena and natural objects into distinct categories . . . has given us the habit of studying objects and natural phenomena in isolation, outside of reciprocal relations which bind them together in a large whole, of envisaging objects, not in their movement, but in their repose, not as essentially variable, but as essentially constant, not in their life, but in their death. . . . And when it happened that, thanks to Bacon and Locke, this habit of procedure passed from the natural sciences to philosophy, it produced the specific narrowness of the last centuries, the metaphysical method".<sup>9</sup>

The Surrealists intended to restore meaning to words and objects through new associations springing from the subconscious mind. Their purpose was to shock observers and readers into a recognition of an object's, or a word's, variable meaning by combining it illogically with other objects, or words. This was not to be done semi-deliberately, as it had been done by earlier writers; it was to be done through automatism. In automatism, the problem of the Surrealists was to retain only those associations which were, in the strict sense of the word, marvelous.<sup>10</sup> The revelations of Surrealism must fall with the blind, and often ugly, grandeur of miracles.

In their search for the marvelous, the Surrealists objected to the moral intervention of the Church which, according to them, had

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in translation from *Dali ou l'Anti-Obscurantisme*, by René Crevel, Paris, 1931, page 13.

<sup>10</sup> "The marvelous is always beautiful, anything that is marvelous is beautiful, indeed, nothing but the marvelous is beautiful". André Breton, *This Quarter*, page 21.

always imposed restrictions as devastating as those imposed by reason and aesthetics. By the word of Louis Aragon, the most intelligible of early Surrealists, the rise of Christianity had marked the end of the truly marvelous. "When the shadows of Christianity had fallen over the Western world, Man no longer dared think at all. . . . Everything which no longer had the right to express itself in the frocked universe passed into another world, that of the supernatural. Thus were born demons and fays".<sup>11</sup> In other words, through Christian morality, the marvelous had become the evil, and had been shunted off from life or forced to appear in an innocuous and weakening disguise. But earlier civilizations had not tried to qualify the marvelous with moral restrictions: "The Greeks and the Romans, who had not undergone the moral repression brought about by Christianity, knew the marvelous only in the form of the exceptional—exceptional beauty, exceptional force, exceptional incest".<sup>12</sup>

The Surrealists ~~then~~ were not only to revitalize objects and the imagery of words by means of new and marvelous associations springing from the subconscious, but they were not to be influenced in their choice by considerations of reason, aesthetics or morality. In 1924, Breton defined Surrealism in view of these tenets: "Pure psychic automatism, by which it is intended to express, verbally, in writing or by other means, the real process of thought. It is thought's dictation, all exercise of reason and every aesthetic or moral preoccupation being absent".

If the contempt for reason and aesthetics implicit in Breton's

<sup>11</sup> *La Peinture au Défi*, Paris, 1930, page 6.

<sup>12</sup> *Idem*.

definition came directly from the Dada movement, the contempt for morality came with equal directness from Freud, Myers, Jastrow and other psychologists who had dealt Christian morality its hardest blow in the years preceding Surrealism. These men, above all Freud, in uncovering the black side of Christian morality, frustration, had altered the whole face of the moral question. For the first time the message of François Curot's *L'Envers d'une Sainte* was enlarged from a specific to a general moral problem. An accounting was taken of the vast world of desires which the Church had heretofore withered completely or aborted into far more vicious repressions. Through Freud, the immense eroticism of De Sade's *Les 120 Journées de Sodome* earned a scientific validity, and was later transcribed into Krafft-Ebing's case histories. Freud had set up a whole world of abnormal psychology in which the Christian ethics of good and evil had disappeared, or had given way to a dispassionate search for the roots of hysteria and desire.

In the course of Freud's discoveries, he had released a new ideology of frustration and fetichism which later Dali was to convert into an original symbolism. He had unearthed a psychology of sex which not only struck at the basis of established morality but, in so doing, had set up a counter-reason which the Surrealists were quick to exploit. Breton, a neurologist, was naturally drawn to Freud's researches, and for the other Surrealists, the medico-scientific romanticism of human desires was appealing territory. Looking for the marvelous, they found in the Freudian world an elaborate viciousness which could compare dialectically with the incest of the Greeks. Though the Surrealists reproached Freud himself for reticence in

the interpretation of sexually symbolical dreams, it was Freud who had suggested that what was repressed might be good. From him, it was only a step to the Surrealists' contention that only the repressed was good, and that the repressed should be set free at any cost.

Freud also provided the Surrealists with a solution to the frantic, and rather pathetic, search for Evil which has characterized so many romantic revivals. His psychology of the subconscious discovered a new hiding-place for the Devil, and it outlined a new subject-matter for those romantics who were, at that late date, bored with the *gaucheries* of conscious human conduct.) To arrive at the marvelous, according to the Surrealists, it was necessary to induce a state of experimental receptivity similar to that of pre-Christian times when "the Gods made themselves into swans in order to magnify bestiality".<sup>13</sup>

Having disposed of reason, morality and aesthetics, the Surrealists felt free to proceed with their exploration of the subconscious. That they occasionally made valuable discoveries, seems an incontestable fact. But their literary purposes and methods have had a more direct bearing on Surrealist art than their literature itself has had. It is not the purpose of this chapter, therefore, to discuss in what degree their prose and poetry have arrived at the marvelous, either by their own or by more universal standards.<sup>14</sup> There do remain, however, a few aspects of the Surrealist literary method which have had

<sup>13</sup> Louis Aragon, *La Peinture au Défi*, page 6.

<sup>14</sup> For examples of Surrealist literature in English, the reader is referred to *This Quarter*, Surrealist Number, 1932; *The European Caravan*, edited by Samuel Putnam (New York, 1931). In French, the *Petite Anthologie Poétique du Surréalisme* (Bucher, Paris, 1934) will serve the same purpose.

an important effect on Surrealist art. Not the least of these is the Surrealists' penchant for propaganda, resulting among other things in a revivification from outside sources of their art as well as their literature.

Seeking propaganda and justification at the same time, the Surrealists turned early to the old romantic practice of finding precursors of the movement in accepted literature and painting.<sup>15</sup> Going behind Apollinaire and Cocteau, who had paved the way for Surrealist literature, they found evidence of unconscious Surrealism in these writers among many: Heraclitus, Lulle, Young, Radcliffe, Monk Lewis, Chateaubriand, Hugo, Lewis Carroll, Huysmans, Rimbaud, Jarry, Mallarmé, Poe, Fargue. All of these adoptions were qualified by specific reservations, and a few of them were justifiable. Nearly all romantic literature from Coleridge's *Kubla Khan* to Jarry's verse "in eating the sound of moths" is full of subconscious imagery. To choose at random, Young's *Night Thoughts* is, as Breton claims, Surrealist from cover to cover. Rimbaud was as nearly Surrealist in action as he was anything else: and did he not say that the poet must turn seer? Synge's drama *Playboy of the Western World* which Breton hailed enthusiastically, provided a link between Irish mysticism and Surrealism. De Sade has, of course, influenced the Surrealists enormously.

<sup>15</sup> It is interesting to note that the Pre-Raphaelites drew up a similar list of precursors, whom they called "Immortals". Their list was not less curious than the Surrealist list. It contained the names of Shakespeare, Keats, Shelley, Byron, and Browning, coupled with those of Washington, Kosciusko and Cavalier Pugliesi. Stars were awarded in the order of merit. But only Christ received four, the highest number possible. See *Poor Splendid Wings*, Frances Winwar, (Boston, 1933).

But the most legitimate forebear of the movement was the strange genius Isidore Ducasse (Count Lautréamont) whose *Chants de Maldoror* has become the bible of Surrealism. From Ducasse's sentence "Beautiful . . . as the chance meeting on a dissecting table of a sewing-machine with an umbrella" to André Breton's first Surrealist image, "A man is cut in half by a window" is not an immeasurably long step. From Ducasse, too, the Surrealists inherited an exoticism of phraseology quite apart from the counter-logic of what they had to say. Their ornateness of style (excepting the wiry prose of Aragon and the later, precise writing of Dali) can partly be traced to Ducasse's sentence, "I let fall one by one, like ivory balls onto a silver platter, my sublime lies".<sup>16</sup>

Whatever its importance for Surrealist literature, this propagandism has had an important effect on Surrealist art in that it has prompted the members of the group to adopt not only painters like Uccello, whom they consider precursory, but also contemporary painters like Picasso, Chirico, Miró, Pierre Roy, and others. Their habit of adoption has resulted, so far as the plastic arts are concerned, in a strengthening of their rather frail accomplishments in art. Surrealism has needed bolstering all the more for the fact that many artists and writers have been sacrificed to the inconsistent demands of literary aestheticians within the movement. Thus while Aragon was foolishly read out of the party for his preoccupation with politics in *Le Front Rouge*, Masson, with immaculate logic, was expelled at the same time for thinking himself a greater painter than Picasso.

<sup>16</sup> *Les Chants de Maldoror*.

While the propaganda we have been discussing has improved both the fame and the quality of Surrealism, it has never answered the most frequent argument against the Surrealists: that their cult of the dream for the dream's sake is entirely a subjective, poetic phenomenon.<sup>17</sup> Detractors have insisted that the movement, instead of paving the way for a new reality through contact with the dream, has been a refuge from reality, eventual or present. To meet this charge, two developments have occurred in Surrealism: first, the Surrealists have taken up the political cause of Communism; second, a new objectivity has arisen within the movement itself under the impetus provided by Salvador Dali.)

In 1926, André Breton published *Légitime Défense*, a booklet in which he declared Surrealism ready to aid the cause of the proletariat revolution. His reasons for doing so were curiously literary, however. In *Légitime Défense* he wrote: "We have always said and we still maintain that the emancipation of style, well enough realized in bourgeois society, could never be accomplished by mere laboratory work relating to words only in the abstract. In this matter, as in any other, it seems to us that revolt alone is creative and that is why we believe that all cases for revolt are good cases".<sup>18</sup> Thus in their first attempts to raise a bridge from research to action through Communism, the Surrealists justified their stand through subjective, and almost puerile, reasoning.

Nevertheless, their connection with Communism is not without

<sup>17</sup> This objection is summed up in Dr. Mario Praz' statement that Surrealism is merely a *reductio ad absurdum* of the nineteenth century romantics' "Inspiration". (*The Romantic Agony*, Oxford Univ. Press)

<sup>18</sup> *Légitime Défense*, Éditions Surréalistes, Paris, 1926, page 11.

a certain concrete logic. Remembering that Dada became a sociological protest, it does not seem strange that Surrealism, born of Dada, should turn the same way. The Surrealists share the Communists' hatred of the Church, bourgeois intelligence and war; they despise the Capitalist system for imposing barriers between people who might otherwise reach a Surrealist accord. But their connection with Communism has not gone smoothly. The Communists have long since learned to distrust intellectuals, who are apt to obscure wholly practical issues. Thus when the Surrealists offered their services to the Revolution, the Communists replied that they would be delighted to accept provided the Surrealists came into the party as Communists and not as Surrealists. Perhaps the Surrealists were for a moment willing, but they were certainly unable. As Breton wrote, "They asked me to make, in a *cellule du gaz*, a report on the Italian situation, specifying that I should apply myself only to statistical facts (production of steel, etc.) and above all, *not to ideology*. I was not able to do so".<sup>19</sup>)

One would think that this incident would have chastened the political hopes of the Surrealists. On the contrary, they lean more and more towards Communism, until Breton at the present time shows the same engrossment in politics for which he once dismissed Aragon. In 1930, the name of the official Surrealist magazine was changed from *La Révolution Surréaliste* to *Le Surréalisme au Service de la Révolution*. Yet the Communist cause has contributed almost nothing towards an objective expansion of Surrealism. Instead, it has made the subjective limits of the movement even more apparent.

<sup>19</sup> *Second Manifeste du Surréalisme*, Éditions Kra, Paris, 1930, page 30.

Through Salvador Dali, on the other hand, Surrealism is going through an important and more tangible objectivization. In 1930, he published *La Femme Visible*, a book which proclaims the beginning of a newer Surrealism. Illustrated by his own texts and drawings, the text of *La Femme Visible* marks the end of the laboratory stage of the movement, and the start of an objective expansion in both literature and painting. On the first page of the text, Dali wrote: "I think the time is rapidly coming when it will be possible (simultaneously with automatism and other passive states) to systematize confusion thanks to a paranoiac and active process of thought, and so assist in discrediting completely the world of reality." He added that this statement applied to his own efforts only, but Surrealism was steadily losing force amid the vagaries of politics, and the statement was prophetic of a new direction for the whole movement.

The full importance for Surrealism of *La Femme Visible* can best be appreciated by comparing Dali's sentence, quoted above, with Breton's earlier definition of Surrealism as "thought's dictation, all exercise of reason . . . being absent.") For although Dali added in parenthesis, "simultaneously with automatism and other passive states", it is obvious that for him, and for the newer Surrealism, automatism and the deliberate suspension of the conscious mind are dead. In place of the subjective "poetic streaks" which the earlier Surrealists learned to turn on and off with the machinery of their *séances*, Dali offers the ever-present, malignant distortions of an active paranoia. Instead of regarding the subconscious mind as an inviolate entity which must be preserved in a vacuum, Dali wishes to establish a bridge to the subconscious through paranoia. For him

paranoia constitutes a passage-way over which the phenomena of the dream-world can proceed into the world of reality, gaining force and clarity on the way. Through paranoiac symbols, he intends to project subconscious images outwards to the world of reality where they will have the unanswerable logic of the clearest arguments of madmen.

In seeking to objectify the subconscious through paranoia, Dali has been forced to insist on the re-identification of the dreamer with his dream. For the first Surrealists, intent as they were on submerging the individual in order to arrive at a general and poetic method of defining the dream-world, it had been important to make the dreamer an automaton in research. The dreamer's capacity had been to set the dream in motion, and then to withdraw his identification with it. The resulting record of the subconscious mind as an entity would in this way remain impersonal and pure; anonymity was the single way of avoiding exploitation of the dreamer at the expense of the dream. Dali, however, accepting the documents of the subconscious gathered by the early Surrealists, as they in turn had accepted the documents of Freud, believes that the time is at hand when the Surrealists can stress communication of their discoveries through individual and paranoiac processes of thought. Thus the subjective anonymity of the early experimenters must be abandoned in favor of direct personal control of the dreamer over his dream, of the obsessed over his obsession. For our purposes, the net result of this change is that Surrealism may now produce individual artists, and has already done so in Dali. Before, it had a tendency to produce a recognizable art but few recognizable artists.

Another important result of Dali's evident self-rationalization is that, being a painter and not, except incidentally, a writer, his objectivity has tended to revolve around objects themselves rather than around words. Thus a concrete symbolism has spread from him throughout the movement, and for the first time literature begins to have secondary significance in the movement. The illogical and poetic association of words so characteristic of early Surrealism is superseded by a paranoiac, logical grouping of objects. And Breton himself has heralded the need for a more concrete symbolism, though remaining otherwise hopelessly confused as to the newer Surrealism.<sup>20</sup> Dali, going a step farther, has suggested the manufacture of symbols over which the dreamer, awake, can exercise control and so satisfy his paranoiac desires. He has suggested that movable objects (to be called "articles operating symbolically") be constructed, whose Surreality would depend as much on their motion as on their size and shape, and in practice these articles have proved surprisingly successful as communicating mediums of paranoiac symbolism.<sup>21</sup>

A still more recent development of Dali's desire for paranoiac contact with the dream has been his desire to complete identification

<sup>20</sup> "Thus the other night during sleep, I found myself at an open-air market in the neighborhood of Saint-Malo and came upon a rather unusual book. Its back consisted of a wooden gnome whose white Assyrian beard reached to its feet. Although the statuette was of a normal thickness, there was no difficulty in turning the book's pages of thick, black wool. I hastened to buy it, and when I woke up I was sorry not to find it beside me. It would be comparatively easy to manufacture it. I want to have a few articles of the same kind made, as their effect would be distinctly puzzling and disturbing". *This Quarter*, page 200.

<sup>21</sup> For examples of "articles operating symbolically", see *This Quarter*, pages 205 and 206.

with dream-state articles by eating them.<sup>22</sup> From the comparatively simple wish to identify himself with truly edible objects, such as macaroons in Chirico's pictures, fried eggs in his own, he has passed on to a famine for less digestible articles such as *Art Nouveau* architecture and Napoleon's pants. It is impossible, of course, to foresee at what pathological goal this depressing development will end, but so far it has been restricted to Dali himself. Yet no one else in recent Surrealism has contributed anything half so valuable as Dali's painting, and the whole movement in art is at present centered on him just as previously, around 1927, it was centered on Picasso's unofficial support.

<sup>22</sup> "As we think it over, we suddenly find that it does not seem enough to devour things with our eyes, and our anxiety to join actively and effectively in their existence brings us to want to eat them". Salvador Dali, *This Quarter*, page 205.

# THE ART OF THE SURREALISTS

THE ART of the Surrealists during the first few years of the movement was practically identical to the art they had produced as Dadaists. This is perhaps natural in view of the fact that they had not succeeded in forming a recognizably Dadaist painting until the very end of the Dada movement. While the literary members of Dada, under Tzara's guidance, were crystallizing their form of protest through innumerable manifestoes, the artists remained confused and undecided. The meeting places of Dada were hung with paintings by Picasso, Braque and Modigliani; the Dadaist painters and sculptors wavered between their admiration for these masters and their desire to keep step with the nihilism of the movement to which they belonged. Finally they learned that a new, post-cubist art was necessary; Tzara wrote, "And I find that one was wrong to say that Dadaism, Cubism and Futurism rested on a common foundation. These latter tendencies were above all based on a principle of technical and intellectual perfection, while Dadaism has never depended on any theory, and has been only a protest. . . ." <sup>1</sup>

In addition to the influence of the literary Dadaists, considerable pressure from outside artists impelled the Dada painters toward a

<sup>1</sup> "L'Esprit Dada et la Peinture", by Georges Hugnet, (*Cahiers d'Art*, 1932, page 359).

post-cubist art. Particularly strong was the influence of Marcel Duchamp, whose elusive intelligence lies behind so much of modern art. As early as 1911, Duchamp had thumbed his nose at the Cubists in the famous *Nude Descending the Staircase*. Duchamp being the same age as most of the Dadaists, his independence of Cubism was more impressive to them than that of painters like Matisse, Rouault and Derain, whose styles of painting had been formed before, or the same time as, Picasso's.

Duchamp foresaw, perhaps, that while Cubism was an adequate method for its inventors, Picasso and Braque, it would lead to dead imitation at the hands of others. Moreover, for Duchamp and his followers, Cubism was not revolt enough against the hideous "art appreciation" of the late nineteenth century. While Picasso and Braque felt a certain contempt for what was "aesthetic", their contempt was confined to the stupidly aesthetic. Cubism, on the whole, had merely substituted an intelligent aestheticism for a dubious one. Many of the younger painters wanted to abolish aestheticism altogether. A growing sense of the artist's inferiority in the twentieth century world undoubtedly had a part in their reaction; but they were irritated even more by the eagerness of the cultivated public to worship art as Art, without discrimination. The enormous amount of explanatory mumbo-jumbo that followed on the heels of Cubism increased this irritation very painfully. Thus the contempt for established art grew steadily more inclusive, until in 1920 Duchamp put a moustache on the *Mona Lisa*, while Picabia stuck a toy monkey on a frame and called it a portrait of Cezanne.

In place of the aesthetic, Duchamp and others wished to substi-

tute the non-aesthetic; in the place of the *objet d'art* the commonplace and utilitarian object of ordinary life. In 1912, Duchamp, as a protest against the untouchability of art, began to proclaim the beauty of "ready-made" objects found in department stores. He asserted, half seriously, that these objects had an accidental quality which was far superior to that of objects wrought by craftsmen and artists. Later he claimed to prefer them to even the greatest painting and sculpture, and in 1917 he brought the "ready-made" to its height by submitting to an exhibition a fountain made out of a urinal.

Behind this sarcastic gesture, there was a real respect for non-artistic materials, a respect which, as a matter of fact, Picasso, Braque and Gris shared. Their use of sand, glass, newspaper, and wood in compositions of the synthetic-cubist period was proof that they too admired the surprising quality of familiar textures. Yet they admired these materials only in terms of their convertability into serious art, whereas Duchamp and other younger artists admired them for their own spontaneous beauty.

During the war, a similar break with Cubism and with aestheticism in general was going on in New York. There Picabia and Man Ray began to affix odd objects to their paintings for quite different reasons than those of Picasso and Braque. Though they remained dependent on the Cubists for general plastic arrangement, they began to use odd materials, not to create an architecture, but to reestablish a contact with the world of spontaneity and even of sentiment. In their paintings from 1917 to 1919, a definite fantasy began to show, and emphasis was placed on arousing an emotion of surprise rather than an appreciation of strictly plastic values. Duchamp's disgust

with the intellectuality of art was beginning to take the form of a counter-art built on emotion and literary associations.

The Dada artists too, though they never entirely freed themselves of Picasso's influence, finally developed a new painting in which the poignancy of accident replaced both the formal order of Cubism and the nose-thumbing protests of the early Dadaists and Duchamp. In Cologne, during the last year of the movement, Hans Arp and Max Ernst produced, by a kind of spontaneous dislocation, a type of work which was to be a mainstay of early Surrealist art. The particular process, known as the *collage*,<sup>2</sup> was responsible for a widespread re-birth of the literary fantasy which had been precluded from serious art by the Cubists. Significantly, Arp had once been associated with Paul Klee, while Ernst had always admired Chirico profoundly. The *collage* combined the contempt for aesthetics of Duchamp and the first Dadaists, with a respect for those surprising combinations of objects previously achieved by Picabia, Man Ray and Duchamp again. The careful selection and order of the Cubists were dismissed as being too aesthetic and as lacking in spontaneity. Often several Dadaist artists collaborated on the same *collage*, as Arp and Ernst did in the famous *Fatagaga* series. The careful, personal control which Picasso, Braque and Gris had exercised over their paintings was abandoned altogether.

Nevertheless, the *papiers collés* of Picasso, and to a much lesser

<sup>2</sup> Collage: "the cutting up of various flat reproductions of objects or of parts of objects, and the pasting of them together to form a picture of something new and odd". Max Ernst, "Inspiration to Order", *This Quarter*, page 80.

The *collage* was presently expanded to include combinations of flat reproductions with painted or drawn lines and passages of color.

degree of Braque, provided a strong impetus to the ultimate perfection of the *collage* which Arp, Ernst and others undertook when they became Surrealists. The Cubists, as already mentioned, had affixed natural or manufactured materials to their canvases both to test and to vary composition and texture. Painters in centuries past had made equivalent tests of their pictures through meticulously painted passages; Picasso and Braque, in line with the new respect for the non-aesthetic, merely availed themselves of a pre-existing realism instead of trying to simulate one.

Looking at the *papiers collés* of Picasso, the Surrealists were struck by the new reality, the hyper-reality, of commonplace objects isolated on a painted surface. The transition from the destructive nihilism of Dadaist art to the positive romanticism of Surrealism was accomplished through the sudden recognition of the hyper-reality of the *collage*. What had once been a negligible piece of sandpaper, or a banal engraving, acquired a different meaning when it was surrounded by a painter's composition. In the same way, the words which Braque, first of all, painted onto his pictures, had not their accepted meaning but the power to evoke unfamiliar images. The uncanny emphasis which words and materials assumed, when wrenched from ordinary usage, suggested to artists a way of duplicating the word-dislocations of the literary Surrealists. In the *papiers collés* there was evident a Surrealism held in check to architecture. All that was necessary to create pure Surrealism was to break down the rigid order in which the real and the unreal had been held by the Cubists. With architecture, the last vestige of tradition abandoned, art could indeed become "the fortuitous encounter upon a

non-suitable plane of two mutually distant realities".<sup>3</sup> In art, as well as in literature, Ducasse's sewing-machine and umbrella could hold their meeting upon a dissecting table.

A turn of the kaleidoscope, and the symmetry of the Cubists was scuttled into the dream-world disorder of the Surrealists. The *papier collé* gave way to the *collage*, and painting in the usual sense of the word could often be dispensed with altogether (Cf. plates 30 and 31). The painter could be eliminated as well, since the kaleidoscope might be turned by a poet as well as by a painter, an advantage for the Surrealists who had inherited from Dada a contempt for the individual artist.

In using *collages*, the Surrealists could avail themselves of a pre-existing reality in photographs and prints, and the whole difficulty of art lay in the rearrangement of this reality. What Aragon called "the personality of choice" became more important than manual dexterity. A painter's job henceforth was not to build up an individual art, but to dislocate an existing reality until a new art was born spontaneously. The artist's solitary struggle for perfection was described by the Surrealists as *la sentimentalité de la matière*, and was to be abandoned altogether, along with the art object and the *bijou*. Deriving from Dada their impatience with aesthetics, the Surrealists no longer intended to create an art which would hold before other art; they wanted to create an art which would, in Breton's words, "hold before famine". Painting and drawing were simply vehicles, without dignity of their own, which could be utilized to express the literary hyper-reality of the dream-world. As Aragon

<sup>3</sup> Max Ernst, "Inspiration to Order", *This Quarter*, page 80.

put it, "the principle of the *collage* admitted, painters had passed without knowing it from white to black magic".<sup>4</sup>

Black magic had for some years been practiced in painting by the Italian artist, born in Greece in 1888, Georgio di Chirico. Chirico's childhood in Greece had provided him with a deep and lasting nostalgia for the ruins of antiquity, the broken columns and mutilated statues, the marble chips of decay. This nostalgia was given a morbid and metaphysical turn by the influence of Böcklin's paintings which he saw in his later travels through Germany. Coming to Paris around 1911, he commenced an extraordinarily fertile period of painting which lasted for ten years. From 1911 to 1915 in Paris, and for the next five years in Italy, Chirico painted pictures which have influenced not only the Surrealists, but the Neo-Romantics as well. Not until after 1920 did his ample invention begin to tire. Then he became fatally attracted by the great Normandy horses in the agricultural fairs at Paris, and the interminable horse pictures began. Not long after, there commenced to appear the yellow Italian nudes, arching their academic eyes at *Il Duce*, and marking Chirico's permanent refuge in pot-boiling.

Meanwhile, he had provided the Surrealists with a starting-point in their attempts at the dislocation of reality. He provided them perhaps with a finishing-point as well, since except for Dali's, no art of the official Surrealists can compare in quality with the early paintings of Chirico. His influence on the Dadaists had been considerable, and his influence on the Surrealists was all-important from the beginning. In both his occasional prose and his painting, he showed a

<sup>4</sup> *La Peinture au Défi*, page 13.

complete devotion to dream-world mythologies, which brought him nearer than any other artist to the Surrealist purpose. He was, in short, the single painter of the Cubist generation whose painting had foreshadowed Surrealism on the ideological side as Picasso's had foreshadowed it on the technical. If Picasso's *papiers collés* were responsible for the Surrealist *collages*, Chirico's pictures were largely responsible for the paintings which the Surrealists produced concurrently with the *collages*. As early as 1914, he had written: "What I hear is worth nothing to me; there is only what my eyes see when they are open and *more often when they are closed*".

His paintings from 1911 to 1920 fall into two general classifications, though many of his pictures belong to both. First, there are the paintings in which he conveys an illusion of romantic isolation and silence, of a still and remote nostalgia (See plate 36). This he does through technical romanticisms: far perspectives, strong but mellow light, and long shadows. The perspectives are led to infinity by the repeated archways of his long buildings and by the abrupt scaling down of figures in the background. Usually there is some unbelievable action within the picture: a ghostly locomotive passes in the foreground or against the horizon and leaves the silence inviolate; a child rolls her hoop towards the forbidding shadow of an unseen statue.

In Chirico's paintings of this genre are implicit nearly all the technical romanticisms which both Surrealists and Neo-Romantics have utilized time and again. If he had done nothing else, he would certainly have earned his place as one of the most important twentieth century artists. But in his paintings belonging to the second

classification, he even more definitely prefigured the Surrealists. In these, the vaguely familiar disorder of the dream-world is recorded without restraint or too conscious arrangement. The romantic bric-a-brac of an extremely fertile imagination—fragments of a ruined classicism, scientific instruments, fruit and vegetables, blackboards covered with abstruse diagrams, balls and pins, cannons and clocks, figures with muffled bee-hive heads holding in their laps the scraps of antiquity—are jumbled together to form a distraught catalogue of the painter's subconscious mind (See plate 37). Yet more often than not, an ingenious, and perhaps involuntary, plastic arrangement has transposed these objects into a restful composition. For this reason, the unreality of Chirico's world is more acceptable than the unreality of most Surrealist art. Behind Chirico's dislocation of reality and logic there are a profound conviction and a lack of deliberate violence to appearances, which raise him above his followers. Whereas most Surrealists are Surrealists first and artists afterwards, Chirico is an artist first and a theorist afterwards.

His influence on the official Surrealist artists, whom we will now discuss, has been immeasurable. The title of one of his pictures could serve for a great part of Surrealist art, as well as for many paintings by the Neo-Romantics; it is called *The Nostalgia of the Infinite*.

**THE EXQUISITE CORPSE:** First of all, as an indication of the dominance exercised by literary members of Surrealism, mention must be made of their direct participation in Surrealist art. Believing, as already indicated, that poets as well as painters could express their

“personality of choice” in art, the literary men tried their hands at painting and at making *collages*. More importantly, they collaborated with the artists in an experiment which came to be known as “the exquisite corpse”.<sup>5</sup> Early attempts at group writing (i.e. sentences formed by four or five Surrealists, each of whom added a word to a sentence not knowing what his companions had written) led naturally to similar experiments with painting and drawing. Each of several writers and painters would in turn draw an image or paint a scene on a common background. Each member would immediately cover his image or scene, and none would know what the other had added until all were finished.

The “exquisite corpse” was essentially a group *collage*, and its object was to break down the coherence of reason by making it impossible for an individual to follow a preconceived logic in art. It likewise served to define a common plane of subconscious activity between various Surrealists. The “exquisite corpse” was frequently more spontaneous than work produced by individual members and its counter-logic was often sharper (See plate 38). Its usual banality of forms is accounted for by the technical limits of drawing and painting at the hands of the literary Surrealists. It represents, however, the very essence of the early Surrealist intention in art, an intention so obviously derived from Surrealist literary procedure. The attempt to replace logical order in art by an inspired combination of illogical parts is most clearly illustrated by the “exquisite corpse”. The process stands for the climax of the laboratory research

<sup>5</sup> The name “exquisite corpse” came from the fact that an early group sentence turned out to be: “The exquisite/corpse/shall drink/the bubbling/wine.”

of early Surrealism in contrast, as we shall see, to the direct painting delirium of Salvador Dali.

MAX ERNST: Of the artists who have long been officially associated with the Surrealist movement, Max Ernst is perhaps the most important. Born at Cologne in 1891, he studied at the University there. In 1922, after his years as a Dadaist in Cologne, he moved to Paris, and in 1924 joined the Surrealist movement. Exhibitions of his paintings have been held in Paris at the Galerie Surréaliste, at the Galerie Van Lee, and at the Galerie Jeanne Bucher. His paintings and *collages* have figured in nearly every exhibition of Surrealist art to be held abroad or in America.

The chief difference between his painting as a Surrealist and his work as a Dadaist has been a new assurance in place of the hit-or-miss protest of his *Fatagaga collages*. Since 1925, he has used the *collage* with more consistently fine results than any of the other official Surrealists. This medium has, in fact, been ideally suited to his rare instinct for an unpremeditated "putting out of place". He has never been remarkable for a new and original vision, but for a fantastic and curious point of view. Like all the Surrealists, he has varied his experiments with the *collage* by painting in oils, but as a painter he usually falls into a dubious mysticism where spontaneity is lost. An extraordinarily objective picture of his, however, is the early *Zu Meerscham* (See plate 39) in which a strange conglomeration of objects is placed against a perspective and sky derived from Chirico.

For the most part, his paintings have a mild charm, a dreamy

and pleasant lyric quality which preserves them from banality. Influenced by Chirico, Picasso, and even by Masson, he has alternated between violent, swirling, semi-abstract forms and a quiet elegance which is reminiscent of Max Jacob's water-colors in feeling if not in kind. His most forceful originality lies in a distinguished use of varied textures, though his interest in surfaces was undoubtedly formed by Picasso's Cubist paintings.

This interest in texture led him to invent a process, which he calls *frottage*, and he uses it alternately with the *collage*. Attracted by the surfaces of old flooring, he rubbed lead-coated pieces of paper over the flooring, and made, through this *frottage*, a spontaneous record of texture. The pieces of paper were dropped anyhow on the floor, and as Ernst said, "I emphasize the fact that the drawings thus obtained steadily lose, thanks to a series of suggestions and transmutations occurring to one spontaneously—similarly to what takes place in the production of hypnagogical visions—the character of the material being studied—wood—and assume the aspect of unbelievably clear images of a nature probably able to reveal the first cause of the obsession or to produce a simulacrum thereof." <sup>6</sup>

The process of *frottage* Ernst described as an "intensification of the mind's powers of irritability". He has broadened his experiments with it to record the texture of various objects,—leaves, sackcloth, metal, even the palette-knife markings of modern pictures. The results of some of these experiments have been published in a book called *l'Histoire Naturelle* (Jeanne Bucher, Paris, 1926) which is certainly among the most spontaneous records of Surrealism. The

<sup>6</sup> *This Quarter*, page 84.

strange surfaces of log-ends, leaves, flowers and plants, take on a new meaning, and reveal uncanny values of composition and line.

Unfortunately, Ernst began to think that the process could be transferred to oils by scratching the surface of thick paint, of different colors, laid heavily onto an uneven support. The unexpected texture of the drawings was immediately lost, and was supplanted by a nacreous mysticism which was exceptional only in that it was wholeheartedly German. Ernst is primarily a graphic artist, and the pity is that he and many other modern artists have not restricted themselves to the graphic arts, as did Grandville and the other inspired illustrators of the early nineteenth century. The parallel between Grandville's romantic illustrations and the illustrations of the Surrealists is, as a matter of fact, particularly striking (See plate 41).

Luckily, Ernst has done a fair amount of book illustration, and to book illustration both the *collage* and the *frottage* are ideally suited. Mention must be made of the fine illustrations to René Crevel's *Miss Knife, Miss Fork* (Black Sun Press, Paris 1931) and above all to the superb *La Femme Cent Têtes*, (Éditions Carrefour, Paris, 1929). In this latter book, the *collage* as illustration reaches its height. The extraordinary force and humor of romantic prints rearranged and super-imposed, cut and turned upside-down, make *La Femme Cent Têtes* a convincing proof of Ernst's value as a master of the *collage*. While his paintings grow tiresome once their exceptional textures have become familiar and their colors grown to look stale and over-pretty, the illustrations to *La Femme Cent Têtes* seem increasingly witty and ingenious. It seems probable that they will last longer than his more ambitious work.

HANS ARP was born at Strasbourg in 1889. He studied painting at the Academy at Weimar in 1907, and in 1908 went to Paris to study at the Académie Julian. He was one of the founders of Dada, at Zurich in 1916, and he joined the Surrealist party soon after it was formed. His sculptures have been exhibited at the Galerie Sur-réaliste in 1926, at the Galerie Goemans in 1929, and have been included in many group exhibitions of Surrealist art.

Arp's allegiance to Surrealism was an early indication that the era of medicinal classicism, Purism in art and *machines à habiter*, was giving way to a more romantic period in which the emotion would regain some importance in aesthetics. Yet he has remained closer to the mathematically calculated world of the neo-plastic painters who, led by Ozenfant, tried to carry Cubism to its final purity, than he has to the literary fantasy of Surrealism. The fact that he has for so long been accepted as a pure Surrealist, by Breton and the other aestheticians of the movement, is indication of a confusion of motives similar to that which characterized the early years of Dada.

His work combines, it is true, a preoccupation with strictly plastic values of space and composition, with a strangely unreal visual distortion which is as nearly Surrealist as anything else. On the one hand, he has been responsible for zig-zag, claw-like forms which have influenced not only Miró, but Picasso; on the other hand, his struggles for a purity of spatial forms have allied him with the Bauhaus technologies. But in this combination of elements in his work, the neo-plastic is certainly the more important. A wood-block sculpture like the *Nombril-Buste-Soulier* (See plate 42) is above all a study in dimensions, and its slight unreality is no more Surrealist than the *Mobiles* of Alexander Calder.

Most of his sculptures are wood blocks in relief, to which the titles, rather than the shapes themselves, have given a Surrealist character. He unquestionably possesses a deep and witty sense of fantasy, but it is qualified in his work itself by an instinctive love of precision and mechanically polished forms. This sense of fantasy manifests itself in the flair for dramatization so apparent in his sculptures, but underneath this dramatization, the wood-blocks are essentially unemotional, intellectualized and technological. In the recent *Concrétion Humaine*, (See plate 43) the vaguely amorphous figure is suggestive of a definite hyper-reality. Yet this hyper-reality is formalized in abstract terms, and is the reverse of unpremeditated. The extremely lovely modeling and the precision of the surfaces are handled with a respect for certain plastic values, and are far from the dislocations of the Surrealists.

Surrealist or not, Arp is an authentic "dark horse" of modern art. His deep devotion to craftsmanship has often wasted itself on inadequate problems. He has, however, invented curiously eloquent forms that have haunted the recent work of many contemporary artists in addition to Miró and Picasso.

ANDRÉ MASSON was born at Balagny in 1896. Arriving in Paris as a young man, he studied painting alone, but his real master was Juan Gris whose painting he admired enormously. His work was bought by Henry Kahnweiler, the first dealer in Paris to support nearly all the great Cubists like Picasso, Braque, and Gris. Kahnweiler gave him one-man exhibitions at the Galerie Simon in 1924

and in 1929. In 1932, a large exhibition of his later work was held at the Galerie Paul Rosenberg in Paris.

As a young painter, Masson showed more promise than most men of his generation. His diluted Cubist works were marked by considerable force, though it was obvious from his early drawings that he was a romantic painter and that he would be unable to bear long with the restraint of Cubism. In color he followed Juan Gris faithfully, but his pen and ink sketches commenced presently to show his interest in violent romantic-abstract forms. He joined the Surrealists soon after the movement was founded, and his career as an independent painter began.

At first he retained the sombre colors of Cubism, and he retained as well much of the Cubist plastic construction. Against backgrounds of abstract planes of color he painted distraught but recognizable images of objects jumbled together in Surrealist confusion: figures and heads, fish and ropes, birds and severed hands. These images seem to be emerging from a Cubist-architectural universe, and the pictures have the look of compromise which characterizes André Lhote's attempts to combine abstract and representational art within the same painting. Presently, around 1926, Masson's inner violence triumphed over his respect for the abstract painters; his dream-world shapes filled the canvases with motion, and their former calm was replaced by a new frenzy. The chaotic malignance which had been obvious even in his early, representational landscapes, became dominant in his Surrealist pictures.

In Surrealism, his paranoiac obsessions found a strong hypothetical justification. His scatological symbols grew increasingly real

and violent. At the same time, however, he commenced to draw strangely lyric animal forms in pastel on supports previously covered with sand (See plate 44). The subtle variations in texture and fine drawing made these paintings more agreeable than most of his others. The hopeless confusion of his other works was absent, and the fantastic subject-matter (usually combats of fish) was better realized. The paintings on sand were free, moreover, of the mistakes in scale which Masson, like so many minor painters, made. Many of his paintings would have been infinitely better had they been smaller and less ambitious; on a large scale, his invention faltered and continuity was lost.

Certainly Surrealism as a background for lesser painters justified itself in Masson's case. After he had broken away from the movement, his painting went downhill steadily. In recent years he has produced few pictures which can compare in quality with his work as a Surrealist.

MAN RAY was born in Philadelphia in 1890. When he was very young his family moved to New York, and in 1908 he entered the Beaux Arts. His first exhibition of paintings was held in 1912. A few years later he turned away from academic painting, and championed the modern French artists whose work was exhibited in the famous Armory Show. In 1920, with Marcel Duchamp and Katherine Dreier, he organized the *Société Anonyme*, a society devoted to furthering the interests of experimental and abstract art. As has been mentioned, however, his own painting was nearer in spirit to Dada

than to Cubism, and he contributed importantly to the return of fantasy and emotion in art. In 1921, he moved to Paris to join the group of Ex-Dadaists who were in the process of forming the Surrealist party. He has lived in Paris ever since, and is an active supporter of Surrealism.

Man Ray's present, and almost certainly eventual, importance is as a photographer. First of all, he has made a brilliant document in portraiture of nearly every great figure in modern French art, literature and music. He has photographed innumerable celebrities of the social and theatrical worlds, so that his files contain perhaps the most complete record in existence of the *haut monde* in Paris during the past fifteen years. Though he has at times inclined towards a trickiness of technique which the new seriousness about pure photography may find distasteful, he is at bottom a sincere and talented craftsman and one of the really great modern photographers.

The two kinds of photographs on which his reputation has been established are called "solarizations" and "rayographs". In the first process, a sculptured outline is given to portraits or figure studies by exposing parts of the unfixed negative to strong light and thus reversing the image from white to black. The rayographs, on the other hand, are made without a camera. A beam of light is projected onto sensitive paper. This beam of light is deflected and controlled by interposing various objects and shading devices between the source of light and the paper. The process can most accurately be described as painting with light, since through skillful manipulation of the projected beam, Man Ray forms abstract compositions at will.

He makes no claim to inventing the rayograph, which has been

known to photographers since the invention of sensitive printing paper, but he has certainly become the master of the process. The influence of his abstract photographs has spread throughout the world, and has been particularly strong in Germany where Tristan Tzara began to show Man Ray's work in 1922. Though reminiscent at times of Picasso's painted abstractions, the best of Man Ray's rayographs have an originality and a spontaneous charm which is partly a result of the quick process by which they are produced (See plate 45). He has also made three short films of Surrealist intent: *Emak Bakia* (1926); *L'Étoile de Mer* (1928); and *Les Mystères du Chateau de Des* (1929).

**THE NON-OFFICIAL SURREALIST ART:** During the first six years of Surrealism, the work of the outstanding Surrealists, Ernst, Arp, Masson, and Man Ray, was supplemented by the paintings of two groups of artists who belonged to the movement by adoption. The first group, already described, consisted of painters like Picasso, Chirico, and Braque, who had been historically responsible for the evolution of Surrealist art, and who were included in all exhibitions and books of the period. The second group, with which we are now concerned, consisted of painters like Miró, Pierre Roy, and Picasso again, who during the period itself did work that was at once claimed by the Surrealists. Of the second group, none became officially a Surrealist. Miró declined the honor on the grounds that he wished to live as an independent artist; Picasso, with pardonable arrogance, considered the whole movement as a dilution of his own genius. Yet

each of these painters contributed enormously to the active progress of the movement during the period when all emphasis seemed to be centered on the discovery of accidental Surrealism in painters outside the party.<sup>7</sup> Of the second group, Picasso was naturally the most important.

PICASSO's non-official support in 1927 rescued Surrealism from premature oblivion, since at that time the movement was badly in need of a major artist to extend its fame. In that year, Picasso's sudden preoccupation with psychological meaning, and with emotional elements in painting, came as a sharp contrast to the baroque order of his 1925 and 1926 abstractions. The Surrealists claimed naturally that Picasso had become, despite himself, a Surrealist, and that he had been influenced by the ambitions, if not by the work, of the Surrealist artists. This, however, seems less probable than that, entering middle-age, Picasso went through one of those inexplicable convulsions of spirit which have characterized the brilliant procession of his work. Then it must be remembered that his paintings of the Blue and Rose periods were surcharged with emotion, and that in those

<sup>7</sup> In a typical book of the period, André Breton's *Le Surréalisme et la Peinture*, (NRF, Paris, 1928), reproductions of paintings by Picasso, Braque, Chirico, Masson, and Miró nearly filled the book. The official Surrealists, Arp, Ernst, Man Ray, and Tanguy, were relegated to a minor place.

It was not until around 1930 that Surrealism was able to get along without both historical antecedents and non-official contemporaries. In that year, Aragon's book, *La Peinture au Défi*, concluded significantly with a plate of a Dali painting. By 1933, both precursors and non-members had been dropped in favor of a restricted list of active Surrealists.

paintings there are traces of the psychological contortions which now he uses with a different meaning. Just as the Neo-Classic period is definitely foreshadowed in pictures of the late Rose period, so the subconscious romanticism of his late pictures has antecedents throughout his career.

Even if he was influenced by the Surrealists, he transformed their minor art into a superb monument to the forces underlying Surrealism. As early as 1925, in an enormous painting called *La Danse*, he prefigured much of the Surrealist painting which would be achieved before the arrival of Dali's system of paranoiac symbolism. In 1927, he turned briefly to the *collage*, and used the process with brilliant results (See plate 31). In the *collage* illustrated, the strange distortions of the figure take on a super-human meaning and are opposite to the static deformations of his previous abstractions. The same year, after making numerous studies and drawings, he painted the *Seated Woman*, (See plate 32) a Surrealist icon which strikes one with a tremendous and uncanny force. The austerity of his abstractions is retained, but the figure has a psychological power which far surpasses anything achieved by the Surrealists themselves. And just as the claw-fingers of the *Seated Woman* and the teeth of the *Figure* (See plate 33) ally him with the paranoiac cruelty of the newer Surrealists, so the monstrous forms of his later works (See plate 34) seem to proceed from a subconscious and delirious vision.

Throughout the three years, from 1927 to 1929, Picasso abandoned the formal order and restraint of his earlier paintings for an actively malignant subject-matter in which strange abstract forms move disturbingly through his canvases. Vicious and powerful heads

appeared in his pictures, and were painted with a restless and sharp intensity. For the first time in years, Picasso's paintings struck directly at the emotions rather than at the intellect. Still, he never lost for a minute the deliberate and final dignity of great art which the Surrealists themselves were only too ready to throw overboard. His new devotion to human values connoted, it must be, a final outburst of that romanticism which, disillusioned by the sentimentality of his early periods, he had tried to suppress.

In his paintings since 1929, he has given no indication of turning away from the diabolical violence of his Surrealist pictures. The curious amorphous shapes which appear in his recent portraits, their occasional eroticism, their brilliant and gaudy colors, mark the continuance of that convulsion of spirit he first showed in 1927 (See plate 34). He leans more and more towards a hyper-real universe in which both Freudian psychology and the new elements of space have a part. In sculpture, the beak-head of the *Seated Woman* has become a point of focus for studies in portraiture that are infinitely more forceful than anything achieved by Arp, Giacometti or the other official Surrealists (See plate 35).

The limitations of the Surrealist movement are never so apparent as when the name of the movement is applied to Picasso. Long past the need of "a metaphysical assurance", he towers above the Surrealists in every way. Only Dali has gone on to something new in art, while the others have for the most part been pale reflections of Picasso's genius. It is, of course, impossible to foretell what new direction Picasso's work will take. It seems certain, however, that officially Surrealist or not, his paintings will stand with those of

Chirico as the greatest art produced by Surrealism. It seems probable that Picasso's fellow-Catalan, Salvador Dali, will stand below them and that, between the work of these three and the work of the other Surrealists, the gap between genius and talent will open wider and wider.

JOAN MIRÓ was born in Barcelona in 1893. He studied first at the local Beaux-Arts school, later at the Gali Academy in Barcelona. He came to Paris around 1920, and he has spent much of his time there ever since, though he invariably returns to his farm at Montroig in Catalonia to work. In Paris, he was at first influenced by the Fauves, particularly by the early Matisse, but he gradually turned to a direct and bright realism which was altogether Spanish in style. Around 1920, he painted a series of portraits which are, perhaps, his finest works, combining a naive simplicity with a subtle, concentrated reality.

In 1925, he abandoned representational painting, and developed a highly personal, abstract ideology for which the focus is the circle, a calligraphic scribble as round as his face and eyes. The color is bright and raw—usually consisting of bright reds, yellows, blues and olives—and the compositions are imbued with a fantastic movement. The pictures are organized to maintain the maximum sense of freshness. His spontaneity and his lack of pre-meditated arrangement have brought him the approval of the Surrealists. As late as 1933, Miró himself wrote: "It is difficult for me to talk about my own painting because it is always conceived in a state of hallucination created by

a shock, either objective or subjective, of which I am utterly irresponsible".

Nevertheless, his paintings have a plastic order which is far from the literary disorder of the Surrealists. If he has increasingly followed the first dictation of his subconscious mind (he has come far since the calculated fantasy of the well-known *Dog Barking at the Moon*) he still depends on an instinctive feeling for plastic arrangement. Possibly the whole complicated philosophy of Surrealism is foreign to a painter like Miró who paints to himself, freely and cheerfully, and who is beyond the need of psychological incantations.

Miró's spontaneous wit is well adapted to the *collage*, which he has used with great versatility and charm (See plate 46). Technically he has adapted the *collage* to his own purposes, combining odd materials and flat reproductions with his curiously forceful, childlike drawing. He is, moreover, one of the few young artists working with abstract forms whose invention is sustained throughout large canvases. His large paintings have a subconscious scenario, much as Tonny's transfer drawings have, and the best of them have an extraordinary animation which ties together the abstract and hyper-real forms, giving them a circular and vivid motion (See plate 47).

Miró lacks in some degree the depth and strength of the great abstract painters, Picasso, Braque and Gris.<sup>8</sup> But his fantastic scrawls and spots of color enlarged to wall size would prove, it seems, infinitely more fascinating than the German-decorator polish of a Diego Rivera. A mural by Miró would be a completion of the tempera walls in Catalan churches, (Miró himself has shown great skill in tempera)

<sup>8</sup> For exhaustive material on Miró, see *Cahiers d'Art*, 1934, Nos. 1-4.

and would be buoyant and fresh, whereas Rivera's murals are a memorial to painters and people who try to act young and who are not, like Miró, instinctively young.

PIERRE ROY is a painter who has long been regarded as a Surrealist, though he himself has persistently denied any connection in purpose with the Surrealist movement. Born in Nantes in 1880, his career has been remarkable in that he has only recently been discovered, though he has been painting for more than twenty years. This is explained by the fact that he has always been independent financially; for a long time he painted to amuse himself, slowly and carefully, with no thought for the market or fate of his pictures.

He studied first at an ecclesiastical college, and took his bachelor's degree. Arriving in Paris in 1900, he studied architecture, then took courses in decoration and drawing under Grasset. A journey to Sicily and the south of Italy decided him to be a painter. Returning to Paris, he worked, mostly alone, at the studio of Jean Paul Laurens, occupying his spare time attending lectures at the *Sorbonne* and the *Collège de France*. Thus like any rich young dilettante, he busied himself with study, and painted in his spare time. A finely developed elegance and a meticulousness of taste were natural characteristics; when he learned to apply these qualities to his painting, his pictures turned professional almost over night.

He still declined to show his paintings, fearing perhaps to expose them to the raucous competitions of the modern art movement. There is no evidence that he was influenced by any of the modern painters.

His studies were confined to the art of the past; he was seemingly immune to the overpowering prestige of Picasso. Certainly he was not impressed by the Surrealists, for as early as 1919 he was painting as he paints now, and his development has been largely a progress in technical skill. He must, if anything, be judged as a precursor of Surrealism, along with Chirico, the only contemporary painter he may have admired. Yet he is the opposite of Surrealist in everything except his arrangement of disparate objects within the picture.

Pierre Roy is a painter who has remained fascinated by the objects which delighted his childhood: seashells, flutes, mounted butterflies, boxes, birds' eggs, bits of the strange wood bamboo. He has retained the wonder he felt as a child for the mechanical contrivances which then commenced to fill the countryside: trains and electric wires and telegraph poles. All these objects he has combined in his pictures, and through meticulous technique, formed a reconstruction of his enthusiasm for them as a boy. But he does not try to paint like a child. He is far from the primitivism of the Douanier Rousseau. He paints like a highly civilized artist, but he does give his subject-matter the clear intensity of new objects in the hands of children.

His painting is a lyric painting, as opposed to the violent dramatics of the Surrealists. Occasionally he has used mildly obsessional subject-matter, (in one of his pictures a giant snake is slithering down a dark staircase leading, presumably, to the bedroom he had as a child) but he is remote from the elaborate viciousness of the Surrealists. In place of the Surrealist romanticism, which alternates between frustration and libido, Pierre Roy is inspired by a compact nostalgia for the objects he collected in his youth, particularly for

the objects he picked up on vacation at the seashore (See plate 48). In themselves commonplace, these objects take on an astonishing illusion of wonder. How a glittering first watch can be combined with the bric-a-brac collected by a scholarly child, to form so authentic a romanticism, remains mysterious despite the obvious excellence of technique (See plate 49).

There is never a conscious discrepancy between the objects in Pierre Roy's paintings. The forced dislocations of the Surrealists are absent; watches and eggs and bits of package ribbon belong together because they are the objects he remembers being fond of. If he uses at times a realism which brings him close to the Surrealist *photographie à la main*, he does so to heighten the wonder of his objects themselves and not to give them opposite meanings as the Surrealists do. The fine precision of his technique is directly in line with traditional painting from the Dutch masters to Raphaëlle Peale, whose curtain in *After the Bath* is complete with Pierre Roy pins and further, has affinities with Dali's *Le Lion* (Cf. plates 48, 54, 55). There is no intellectual plan behind Roy which can fall into disrepute and take him along with it. He is, perhaps, the last of the last of the dandies, in the best sense, and he has already produced enough distinguished pictures so that he can look to the future with more equanimity than most modern artists are entitled to feel.

## THE NEWER OBJECTIVITY:

YVES TANGUY was born in Paris in 1900. He has been active in the Surrealist movement almost since its beginning, but because of

his age and for other reasons, he belongs with Dali and Giacometti to the newer Surrealism.

Tanguy's paintings provide a transition from the art of dislocation, represented by the Surrealist *collage*, to the direct objectivity of Salvador Dali. Technically, Tanguy has for some time been in opposition to the subjective experiments of early Surrealist art. In his painting of 1927, we first find the search for a symbolical representation which later was to reach its best expression with Dali and its lowest banality with Valentine Hugo. Influenced by Chirico and by Ernst's recreation of Chirico, Tanguy adopted many of Chirico's techniques. He used a romantic perspective leading to infinity, he increased the depth of his pictures by scaling down the figures in the background. In his pictures we first come across the endless plains, stretching to far horizons and covered with the symbolical shapes of nightmare. In his paintings of 1926 and 1927, he borrowed the macabre effects of strong light and shadow which Chirico used so powerfully (See plate 50).

Tanguy, in his best works, has created a humorous fantasy which is different in spirit from the paranoiac obsessions of Dali. He has restricted himself to lyric dream-shapes that writhe and twist with an amusing lack of logic. Devoid of cruelty, he paints the mildly disturbing hallucinations of his subconscious with a wit that makes up in some measure for his technical limitations. He is, unfortunately, an indifferent painter, and his subject-matter, sufficiently imaginative in photographs of his paintings, lacks strength in the paintings themselves. As an innovator, he is important to Surrealism (Dali owes him much), but as a painter he belongs with Max Ernst on a relatively low level of accomplishment.

ALBERTO GIACOMETTI was born at Stampa in Switzerland in 1901. The son of a painter, he intended to be a painter himself. From 1913 to 1921, he painted incessantly, progressing through a variety of techniques. From 1915 on, he interested himself in sculpture as well, and made innumerable academic studies of the nude. In 1920 he studied briefly at the *École des Arts et Métiers* at Geneva. In 1921 he went to Rome to see the Renaissance sculptors, stayed two years, and came to Paris around 1922. Presently he joined the Surrealists.

Like Arp, he has varied between the endless polishing and hewing of so much modern sculpture and the creation of semi-abstract Surrealist forms. For some reason, the technical exercises, which have haunted modern art since Cubism, seem more trivial in sculpture than they do in painting. Thus the really beautiful craftsmanship in Giacometti's *On ne joue plus* (See plate 51) is not far from the careful handwork on one of Gaudí's chairs (See plate 52). Yet there are sculptures by Giacometti which have a direct emotional force, and which escape the dead precision for which Brancusi has probably been responsible. His interest in amorphous, symbolical forms has led him dangerously near Lipchitz in certain instances, but in a few of his most recent sculptures he has moved on to a more personal fantasy.

He has been particularly successful as a designer of "articles operating symbolically". His natural timidity is for once overcome, and his really valuable invention, applied to these articles, gives them a freshness, a sense of uneasy stimulation that is a relief from the still-born loveliness of his ordinary sculptures. At Giacometti's hands, the "articles operating symbolically" have taken on new importance in the Surrealist ideology.

SALVADOR DALI was born in Figueras, Catalonia, in 1904. He studied painting at the Academy in Madrid, but was expelled after he had been there a short time. Coming to Paris around 1927, he rapidly assumed a leading position in the Surrealist movement. Not only did his extraordinary paintings and his precise writing contribute a new direction to the movement, but he collaborated with Luis Bunuel on the two most successful Surrealist films to be made thus far. The first, *Le Chien Andalou*, was a short film without sound, originally made on 35 mm. film and later, rather badly, transferred to 16 mm. The second, *L'Âge d'Or* was a full-length film with sound, and though inferior technically to *Le Chien Andalou*, was naturally a more complete document of the newer Surrealism. Both created endless scandal, particularly *L'Âge d'Or* for its vicious sacrilege.

While all of the older Surrealists have retained traces of the Cubist revolt, Dali has been free to develop the Surrealist art of a younger generation. A devoted admirer of Picasso, he has kept clear of Picasso's influence. Except for minor parallels with the art of Chirico and Tanguy, nothing in his work is reminiscent of modern painters; his painting is, moreover, strongly opposite to the painting of the early Surrealists.

(Anxious to stress both an objective expansion and a communication of subconscious imagery, Dali paints the symbols of his obsessions with an incredibly fine talent for the miniature.) These symbols are suggested to him by paranoiac processes of thought, and he is careful to say that they are suggested to him in their final and right order.<sup>9</sup> No alteration or revision is made subsequent to the first de-

<sup>9</sup> ". . . these ideas, delirious at the moment when they are produced, present themselves as already systematized".—Salvador Dali, *Minotaure*, No. I, page 66.

lirious dictation of his subconscious mind; frequently he has no idea of what he has painted until delirium has passed. In place of the subjective dislocations of the *collage*, Dali substitutes the objective mania of paranoiacs. As a result, his symbols are perhaps more widely communicable than the automatism of earlier Surrealists. Scientific evidence is not lacking that the processes of paranoiac reason are not only communicable, but have an awe-inspiring clarity.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, as Herbert Read pointed out, it is far too early to fix absolute standards for subconscious thought,<sup>11</sup> and the relative accuracy and communicability of Dali's symbols must be determined by a much later science. Meanwhile it will be part of psychology's function to clarify so far as possible the processes of subconscious creation; to act, in other words, as medium between creation and the results of creation.<sup>12</sup> Optimistically, the Surrealists believe that Surrealism itself has made the subconscious clear, and it must be admitted that the meaning of Dali's symbols is frequently apparent to people who have not read either the Surrealists or Freud.

Perhaps the most significant fact about Dali's early development is that he grew up among the astonishing buildings, monuments and decorations of the Catalan architect Antoni Gaudí. Anyone who is familiar with even reproductions of Gaudí's fantastic ornaments and *objets d'art* will recognize that Dali has been influenced from youth

<sup>10</sup> "Deliriums in fact have no need of any interpretation to express by their themes alone and marvelously well, those instinctive and social complexes which psychoanalysis has the greatest difficulty in bringing to light among neurotics". —Dr. Jacques Lacan, *Minotaure*, No. I, 1933.

<sup>11</sup> Notice on the paintings of Joan Miró, *Cahiers d'Art*, Nos. 1-4, 1934.

<sup>12</sup> Roger Caillois has already started the systematic examination of concrete, unfamiliar, paranoiacal symbols in his helpful essay on "La Mainte Religieuse", *Minotaure*, No. 5, 1934, page 23 *et seq.*

by their uncanny and ferocious detail (See plate 53). In both Gaudí and Dali occur definite qualities of the Catalan imagination; its cruelty, its extreme directness, its unlimited capacity for fantasy, qualities which are in opposition to the lyricism of a Miró. In addition to Gaudí, Dali was certainly affected by the *trompe l'oeil* realism of the minor masters in the museums at Barcelona and Madrid. Arriving in France, he was attracted by the nineteenth century realists, Gerome and Meissonier, since the clarity with which they painted historical subject-matter was the clarity necessary for a concrete and literal transcription of the symbols of paranoiac obsessions. It seems possible too that he was influenced by the precise brushwork of Dutch masters like Vermeer, and that the dramatics of his "nightmare" lightning were inherited, through Chirico, from the Baroque masters.

Whatever the sources of his art, there is no precedent in painting for his subject-matter which comes direct from the dreams of Krafft-Ebing's case histories. Apart from the vast number of fetiches which appear in his pictures—slippers, hair, keys and phalli—the processes of paranoia are expressed by the fear of castration and the various phobias of abnormal psychology. (He is obsessed by the emasculated tradition of romanticism springing from Abelard.) The inevitable implements of imagined persecution are here: knives and scissors; the devices of corruption, limp watches and swarming ants. Dali himself has described the three great images of life as being excrement, blood and putrefaction. All three images haunt his painting. With extraordinary invention, he has created a Freudian world which may be partly disentangled by pathological research, but which offers at

face value a striking phenomenon in contemporary painting.

Frequently Dali's writings have given clues to his painted symbolism. Thus he once wrote that the insects which swarmed over putrefied flesh were, except for the element of time, capable of appearing as hard and flashing gems.<sup>13</sup> And in *Persistence of Memory*, (See plate 57) Time, symbolized by the watches, has gone limp, and the insects take on the brilliance of jewels.

His paintings, often no larger than postcards, (and usually the smallest ones are the finest) are filled with erotic symbols, of the kind first isolated by Freud, which are scattered against an endless perspective. Technically, he describes them as *photographie à la main*, and his object is to make his images more shocking by heightening their clarity to the point of wonder. He paints rapidly, but with such immaculate detail that his best pictures remain fascinating long after their psychological story has become comparatively familiar.<sup>14</sup> Recently, his color has become increasingly beautiful. Formerly he was so contemptuous of the deliberate search for good taste in painting that he used the most literal realism possible whether it marred the quality of his paintings or not. He availed himself too of the technique, inherited from the *papier collé* and from the *collage*, of pasting realistic engravings and photographs on his pictures when an exact realism was necessary. The past two years, however, he has progressed to a new skill with both color and painted detail. At the

<sup>13</sup> *La Femme Visible*, Editions Surréalistes, Paris, 1930, pages 17 and 18.

<sup>14</sup> That a psychological story could become as tiresome in painting as an historical anecdote was indicated by A. Everett Austin, Jr., who reproduced a Dali painting on the same page as one by Gerome in his catalogue for "Literature in Poetry and Painting since 1850," *Wadsworth Atheneum*, Hartford, 1933.

technique of miniature he is without equal among painters today, though like all paintings which demand to be peered at, his pictures are apt to be precious and to lack both the strong emotional appeal of Berard's and the strong intellectual appeal of Picasso's.

Dali's obsessions may be divided, not too strictly, into two classifications: visual and, for want of a better word, philosophical. An important visual obsession has been that of the double image, defined by Dali as follows: "By a double image is meant such a representation of an object that it is also, without the slightest physical or anatomical change, the representation of another entirely different object, the second representation being equally devoid of any deformation or abnormality betraying arrangement".<sup>15</sup> He goes on to say that after recognizing a double image, paranoiac thought can go on to the realization of a third image, and that anyone endowed with the paranoiac faculty can summon further images at will. In Dali's painting, the uncanny mental repercussions aroused by multiple images are an integral part of his symbolism. Thus in a painting like *L'Homme Invisible* (See plate 56) the *trompe l'oeil* of romantic postcards (See plate 52) is used along with shrewd technical devices to suggest a variety of images which emerge with disturbing rapidity. Psychologically, the rapid succession of images seems to break down reality altogether, and to hint at counter-appearances which may be more important than reality.

Examples of his philosophical obsessions are to be found in his preoccupation with the legend of William Tell and with the paintings of Millet, especially the *Angelus*. Paranoiac reason has led him to reappraise the legend of William Tell, and to consider it a legend

<sup>15</sup> *This Quarter*, page 50.

of incest.<sup>16</sup> Haunted for some time by the symbolism of the story, he has made it the central theme of many of his paintings, and has given it a large importance in the film, *L'Âge d'Or*. In the same way, he has discovered behind Millet's painting a powerful, subconscious force which, Dali claims, proceeds directly from paranoia.<sup>17</sup> The two figures from the *Angelus* are common in his symbolism; he has also used the face of the *Mona Lisa* as a symbol of his obsession with Freud's revelations concerning Leonardo. Both the *Angelus* and the legend of William Tell have served as focal points in his symbolism, and have been central themes around which his remarkable invention has revolved temporarily.

What further expansion of Dali's art will come within the next few years, it is, of course, impossible to say. But he has now arrived at such complete technical mastery, both in painting and drawing, that he must be considered not only the finest of the official Surrealist artists but, along with Berard and Berman, as among the finest young contemporary painters. Even for those who weary of the strenuous theory behind his paintings, and who find that the elaborate viciousness of all Surrealists grows mild and stale with time, there are a great many Dali paintings in which the less complicated subject-matter is handled with great skill and charm (See plate 59). The beautiful grays and blues of the *Paranoiac Astral Image*, the carefully measured scaling down of figures and use of perspective, the

<sup>16</sup> "As Freud resuscitated Oedipus, he (Dali) has resuscitated William Tell".—Rene Crevel, *Dali ou l'Anti Obscurantisme*, page 29.

<sup>17</sup> Millet himself left indisputable testimony to the fact in his brutal lascivious drawings. See *Die Grossen Meister der Erotik*, by Eduard Fuchs (Albert Langen, Munich, c.1930).

See also Dali's "Interprétation Paranoïaque-critique de l'Image obsédante 'L'Angelus de Millet.'" *Minotaure*, No. I, 1933, page 65.

unbelievably fine painting of the boat and figures, make it a picture which even those who distrust the whole edifice of Surrealism can hardly ignore.

Certainly Dali is the artist who seems likely to lead the Surrealist movement from now on. Somewhere, obscured by the dominance of the Surrealist aestheticians who hold faithful to Arp, Ernst and the other older members of the group, there must be younger painters ready to follow the new objectivity of Dali. And whatever our moral, even psychological, reservations to Surrealism, it must be admitted that the movement has created a new and strangely disturbing romanticism. Not as original as it seems to be, and certainly not as ultimately important as its initiators claim it will be, Surrealism has nevertheless given us a few invaluable works of art. It may be that it has paved the way for a more exact science which will some day tabulate the subconscious beyond confusion. Meanwhile, there is a Surrealist world, and it is nowhere better described than in the list of objects to be seen at a recent Surrealist exhibition in Paris: <sup>18</sup>

*“Objets désagréables, chaises, dessins, sexes, peintures, manuscrits, objets à flâner, objets automatiques et inavouables, bois, plâtres, phobies, souvenirs intra-utérins, éléments de rêves prophétiques, dématérialisations de désirs, lunettes, ongles, amitiés à fonctionnement symbolique, cadres, détérioration de cheminées, livres, objets usuels, conflits taciturnes, cartes géographiques, mains, buste de femme rétrospectif, saucisses, cadavres exquis, palais, marteaux, libertins, couples de papillons, perversions d'oreilles, merles, oeufs sur le plat, cuillers atmosphériques, pharmacies, portraits manqués, pains, photos, langues”.*

<sup>18</sup> Galerie Pierre Colle, Paris, June, 1933.

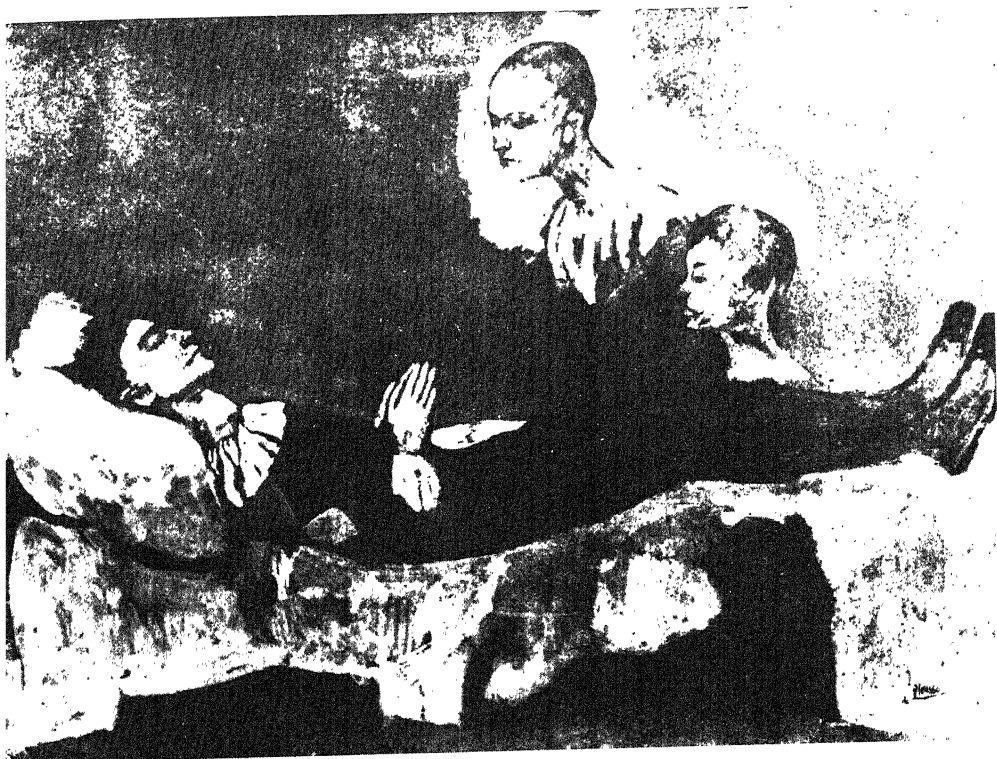
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## PLATES





1. PICASSO: *La Mort d'Arlequin*. 1905





2. BERARD: *Dormeur*. c. 1928





3. BERARD: *Figures*





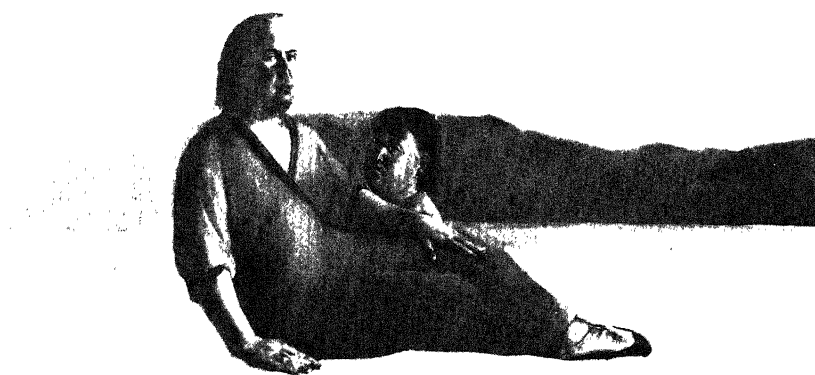
4. BERARD: *Jean Cocteau*. 1930





5. BERARD: *Mozartiana*, 1933





6. BERARD: *Sur la Plage*. 1934









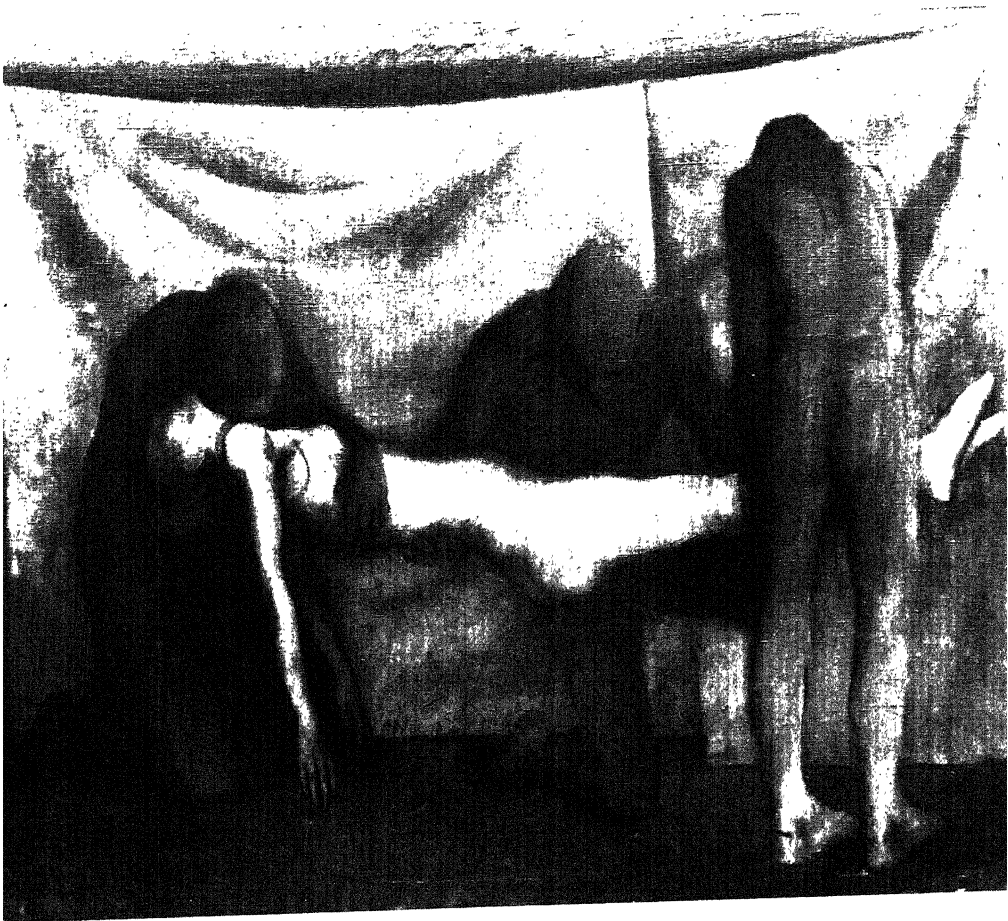
8. TCHELITCHEW: *Figure*. c. 1929





9. TCHELITCHEW: *Princess Paley*





10. TCHELITCHEW: *L'Enterrement d'un Clown*. 1930





11. TCHELITCHEW: *Le Zouave*. 1932





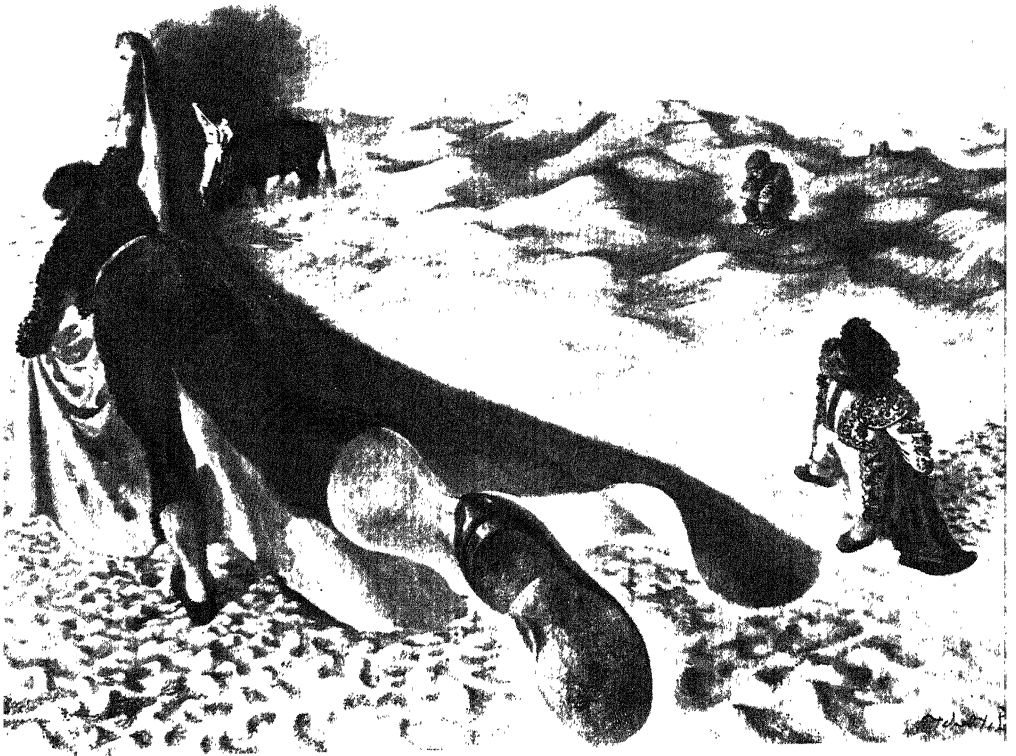
12. PHOTOGRAPHS: from *Es Kommt der Neue Fotograf*





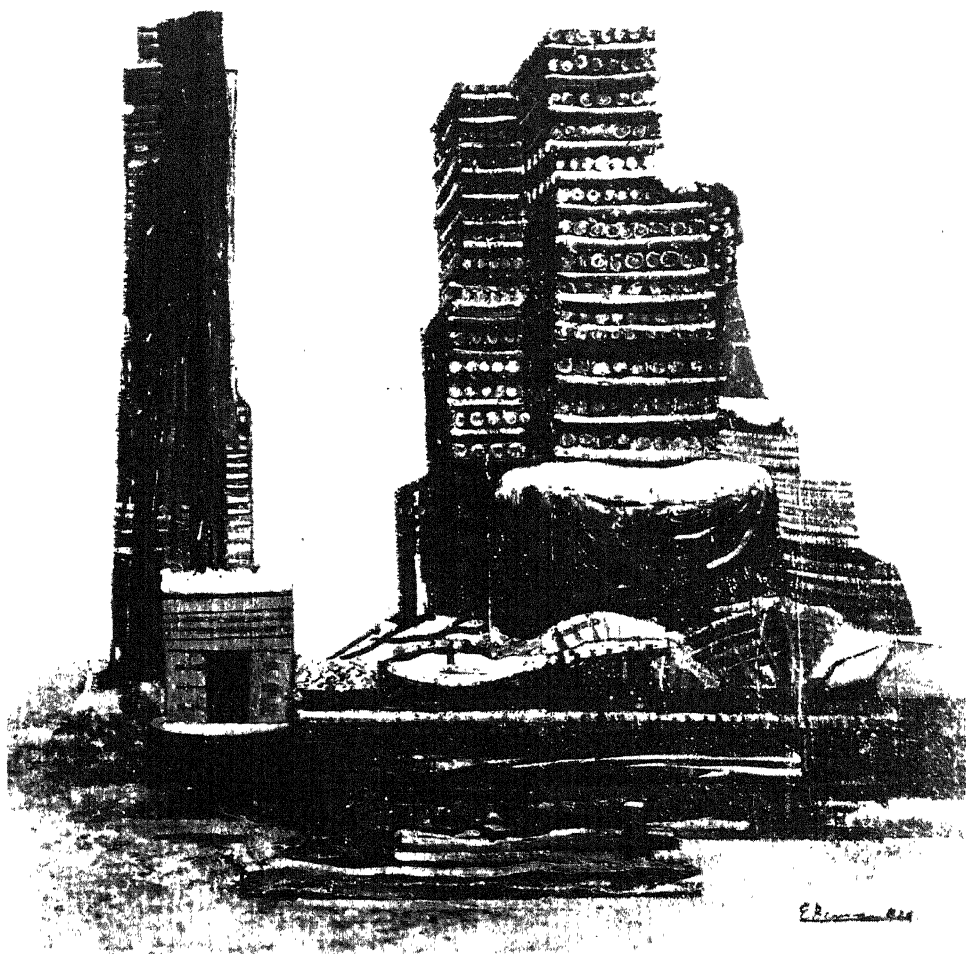
13. PICASSO: *Au Bord de la Mer*. 1923





14. TCHELITCHEW: *The Bull Fight*. 1934





15. BERMAN: *L'hiver*. 1929





16. BERMAN: *Nocturne*. 1930





17. BERMAN: *Le Bon Samaritain*. 1930





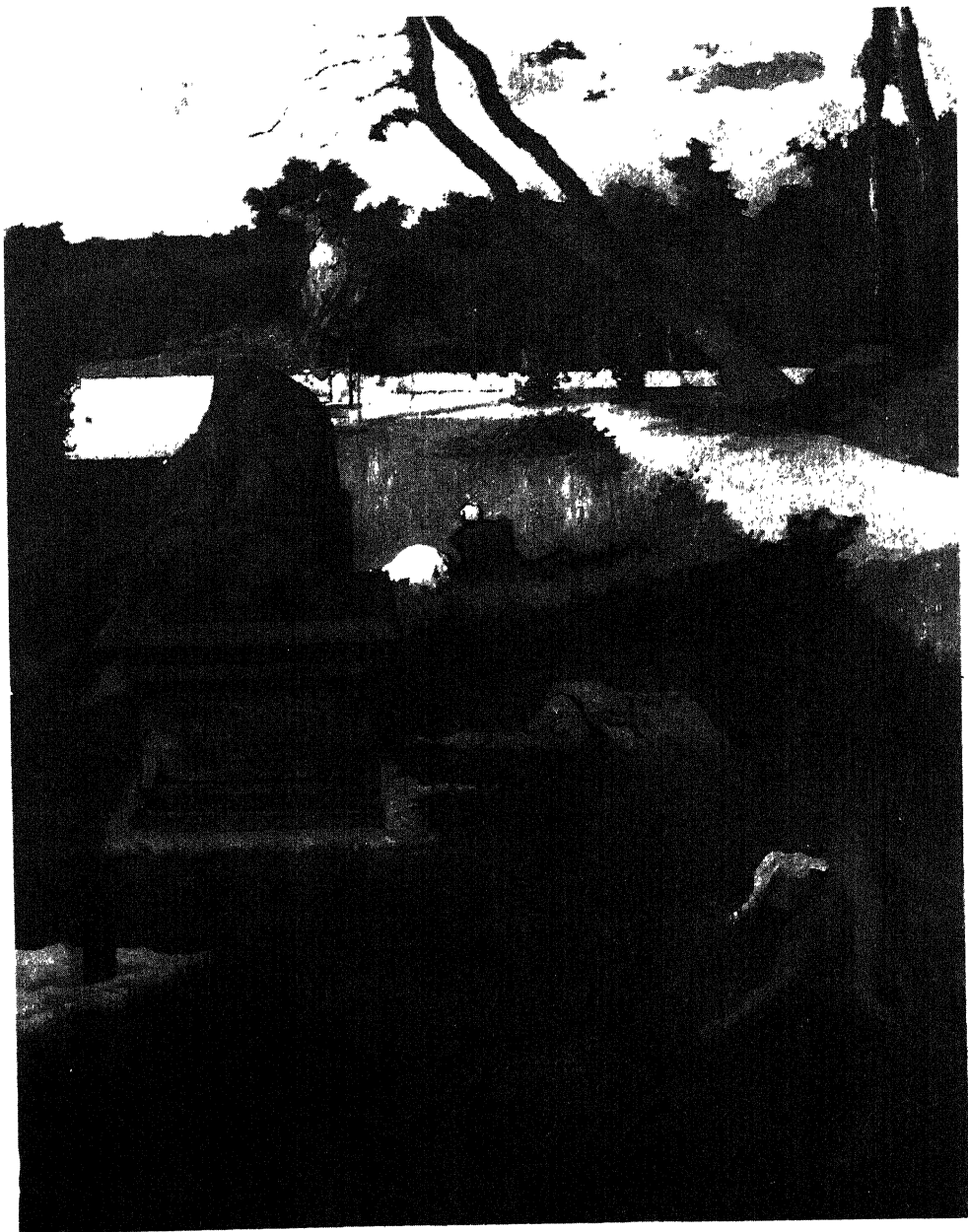
19. BERMAN: *Jeune Homme Couché*. 1932





20. BERMAN: *Venice*. 1932





21. BERMAN: *Statues dans un Parc*. 1932





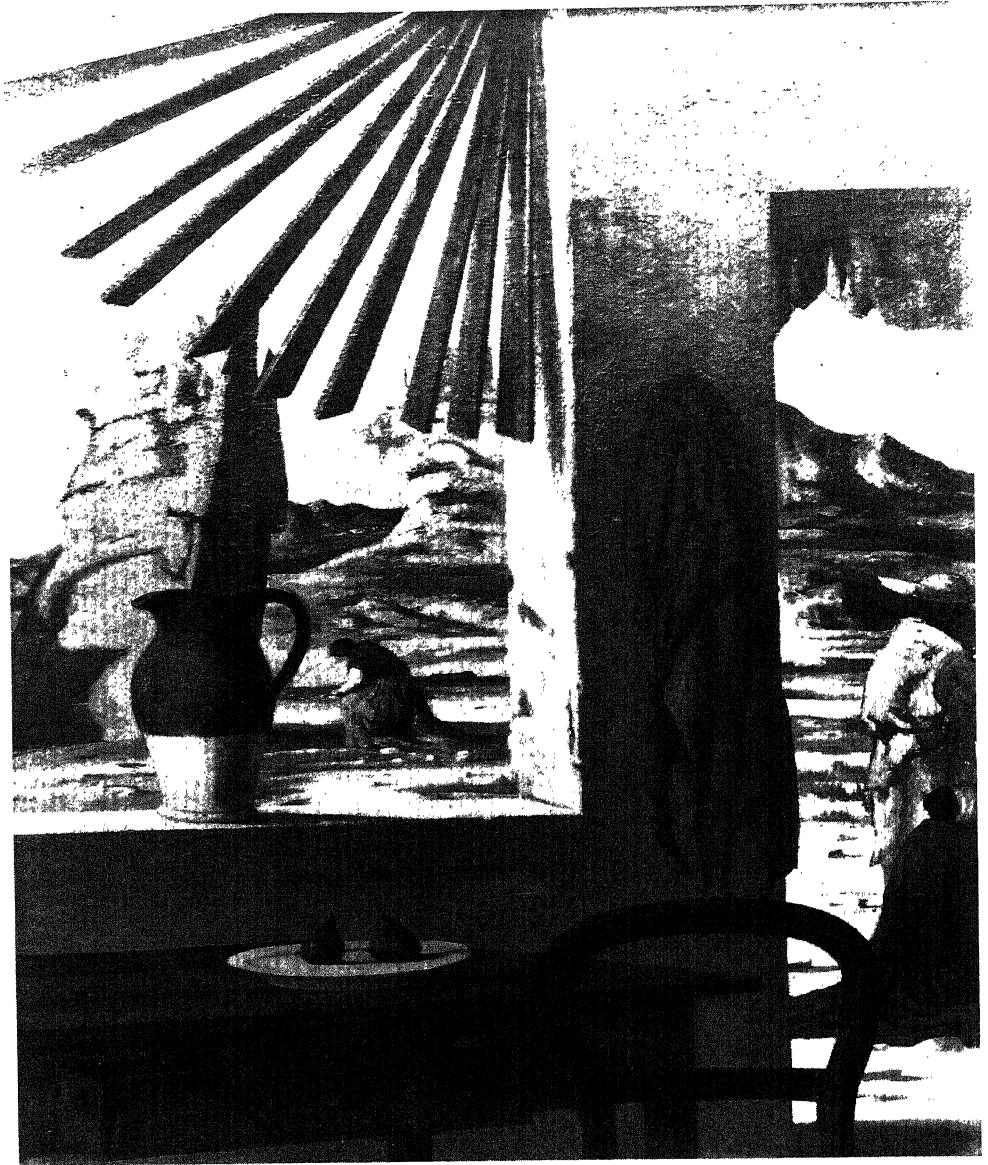
22. BERMAN: *Les Oliviers*. 1933





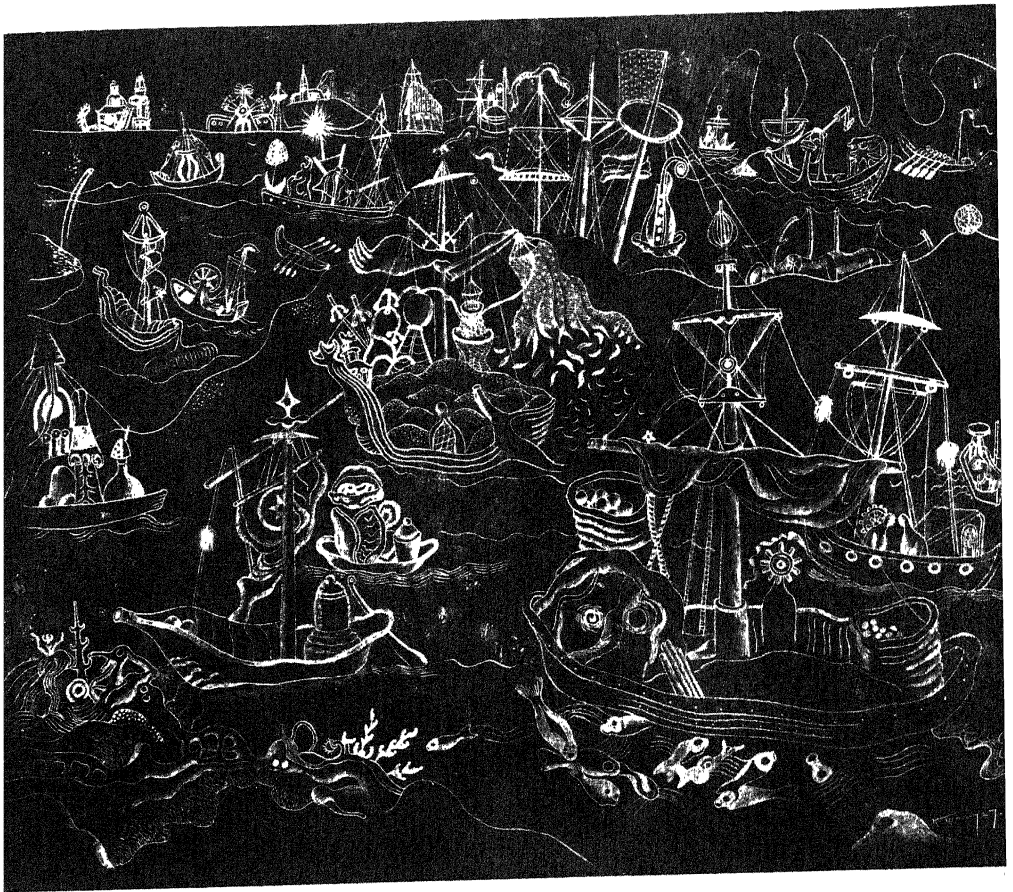
23. BERMAN: *Souvenir des Baux*. 1933





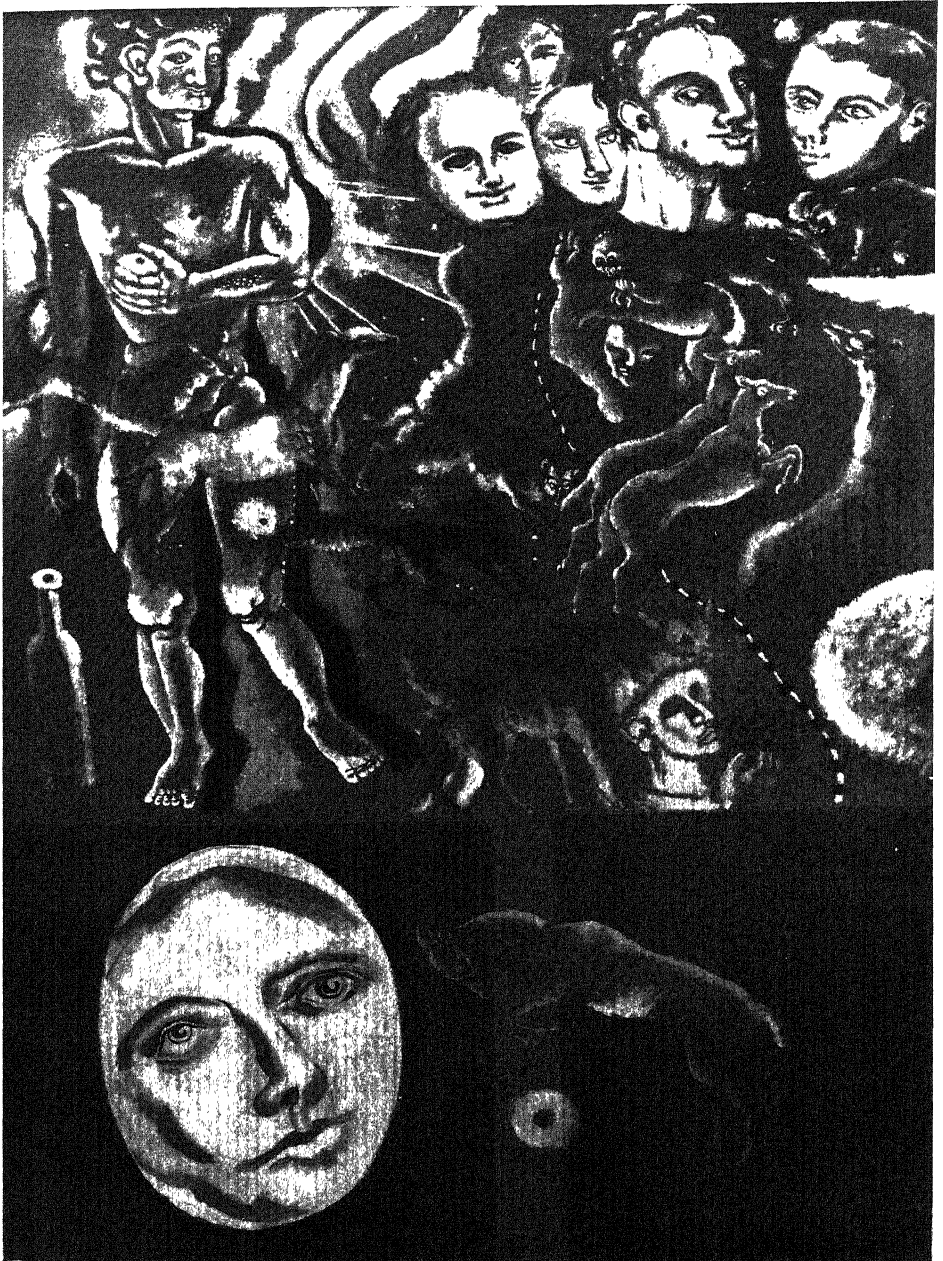
24. BERMAN: *La Cruche sur la Fenêtre*. 1934





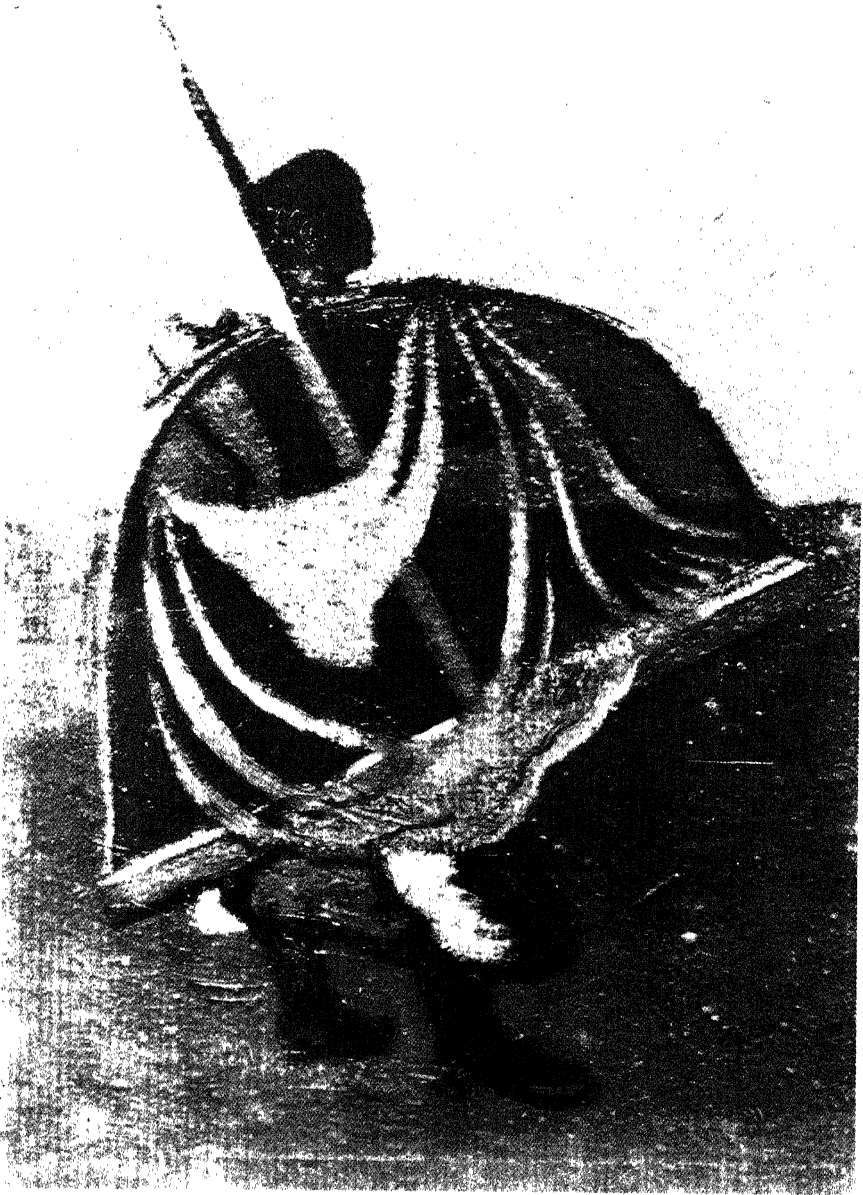
25. TONNY: *Les Bateaux*. 1926





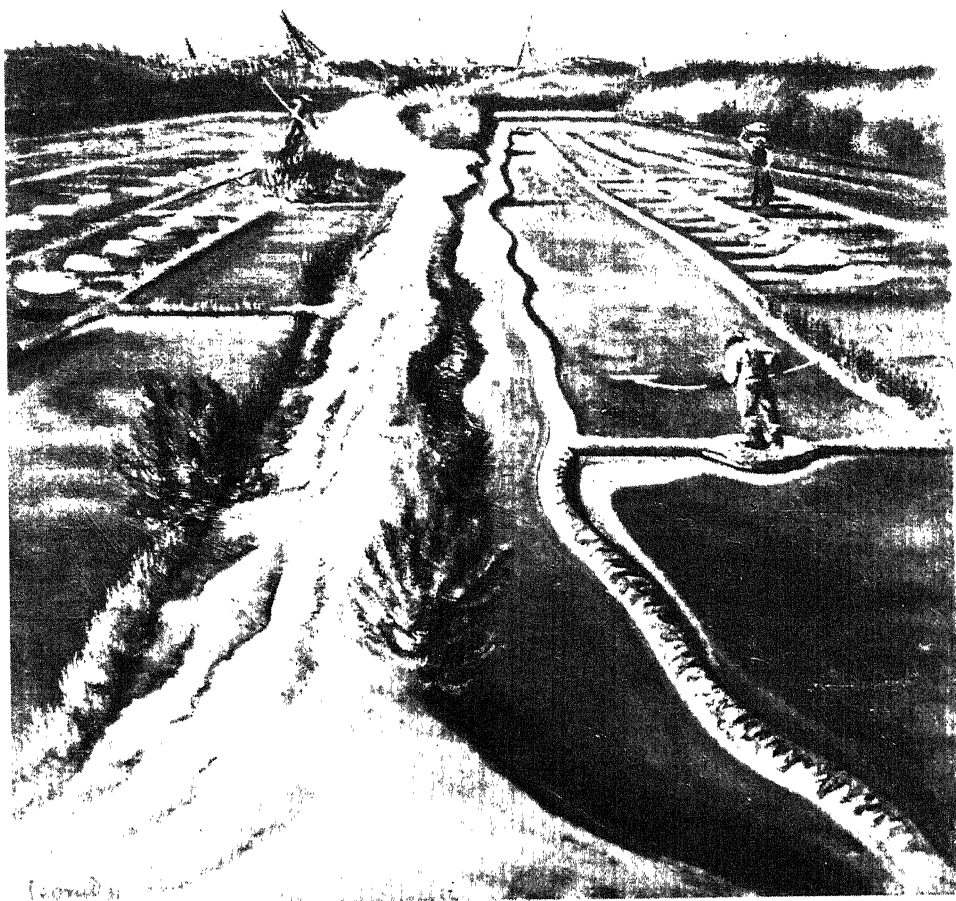
26. TONNY: *Figures*. 1926





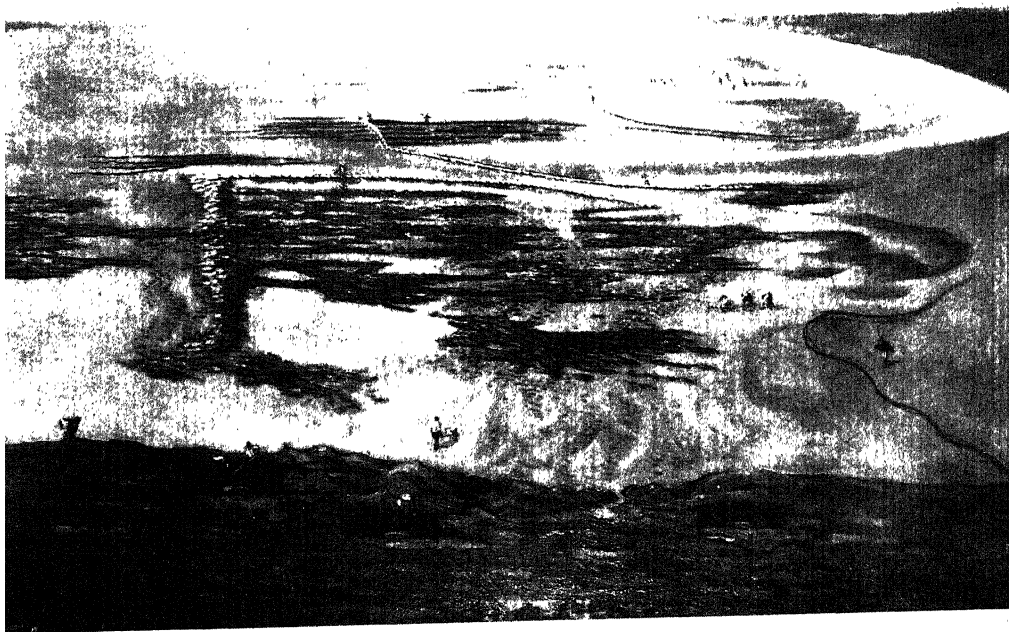
27. LEONIDE: *Fisherwoman*. 1930





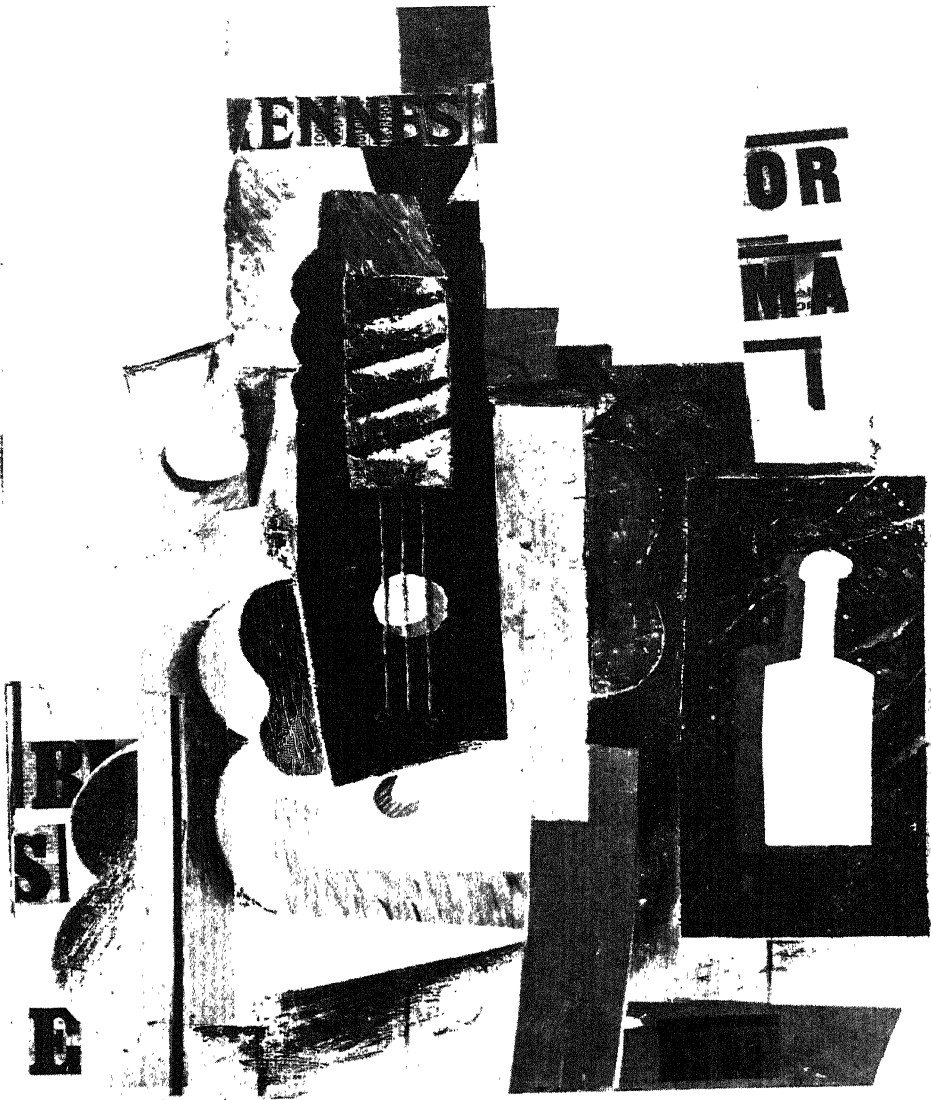
28. LEONIDE: *Les Paludiers*. 1931





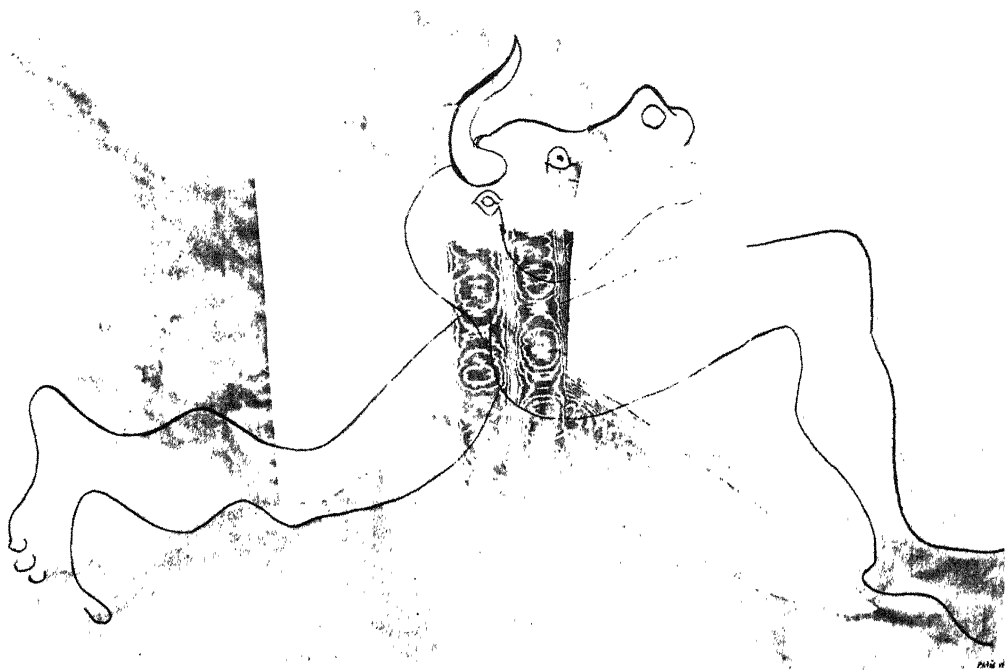
29. LEONIDE: *Landscape*. 1934





30. PICASSO: *Nature Morte à la Guitare*. 1913





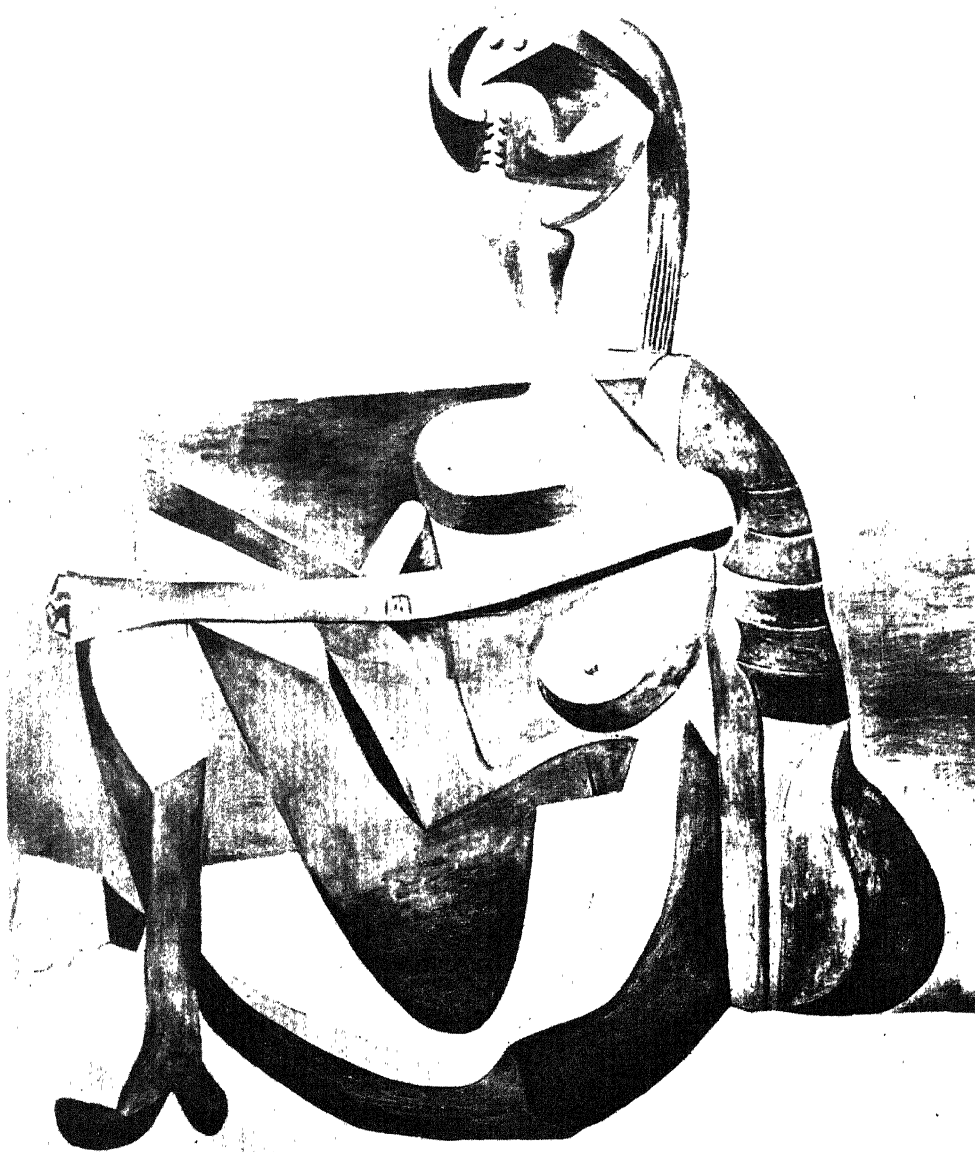
31. PICASSO: *Collage*. 1926





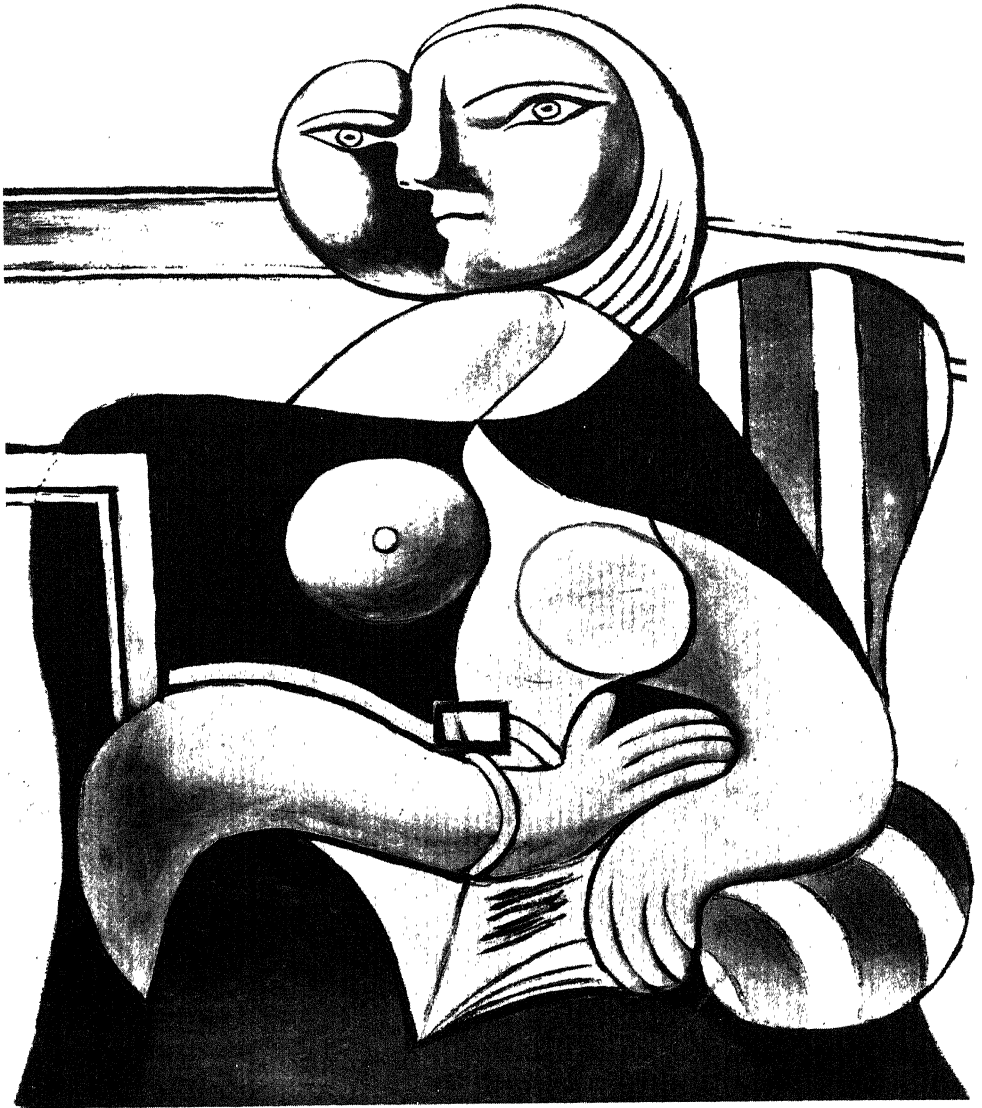
32. PICASSO: *Seated Woman*. 1927





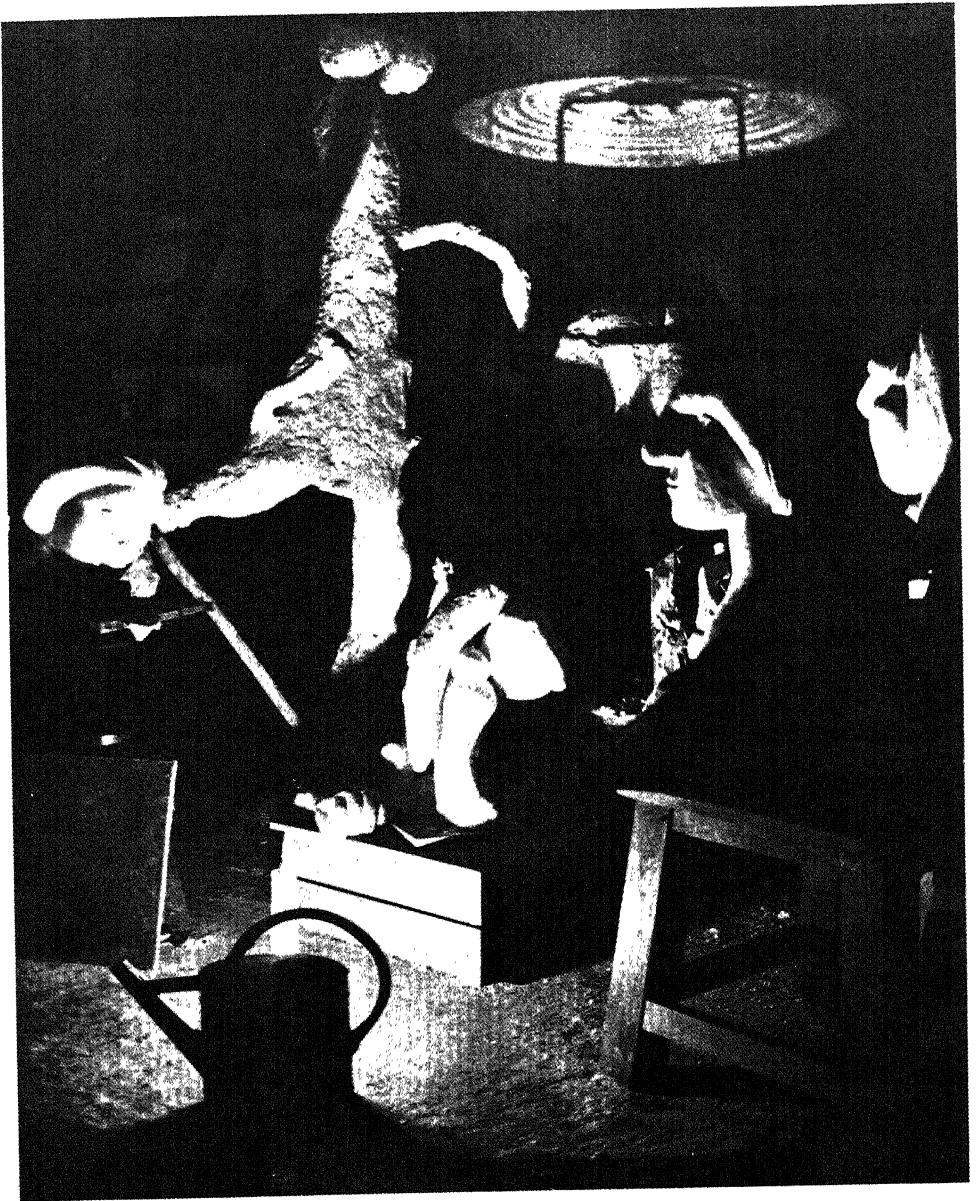
33. PICASSO: *Figure*. 1931





34. PICASSO: *Portrait*. 1932





35. PICASSO'S STUDIO. Brassai





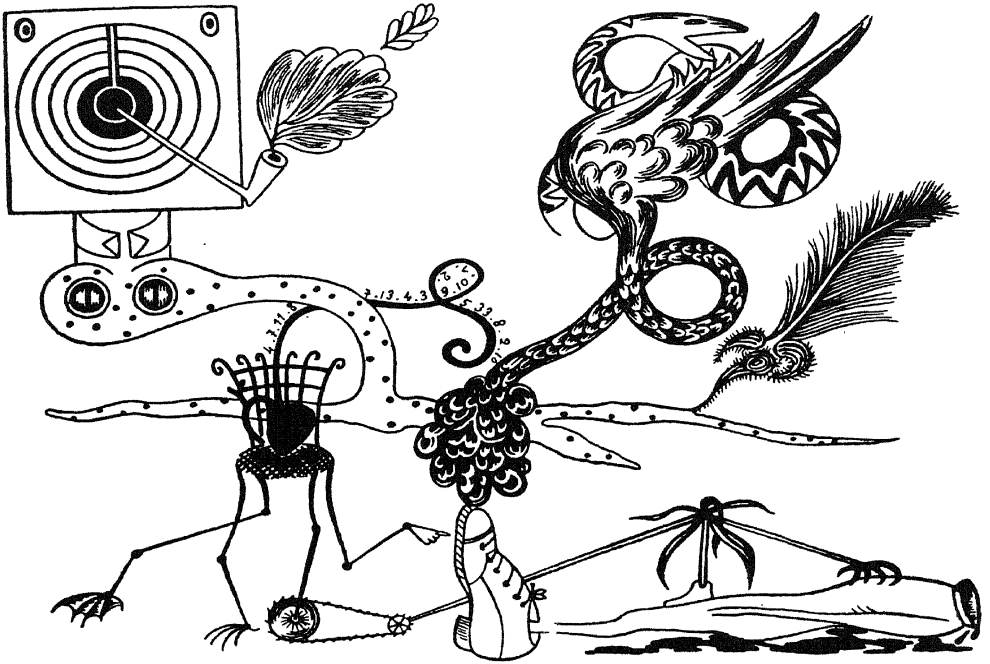
36. CHIRICO: *Souvenir d'Italie*. 1913





37. CHIRICO: *Les Muses Inquiétantes*. 1917

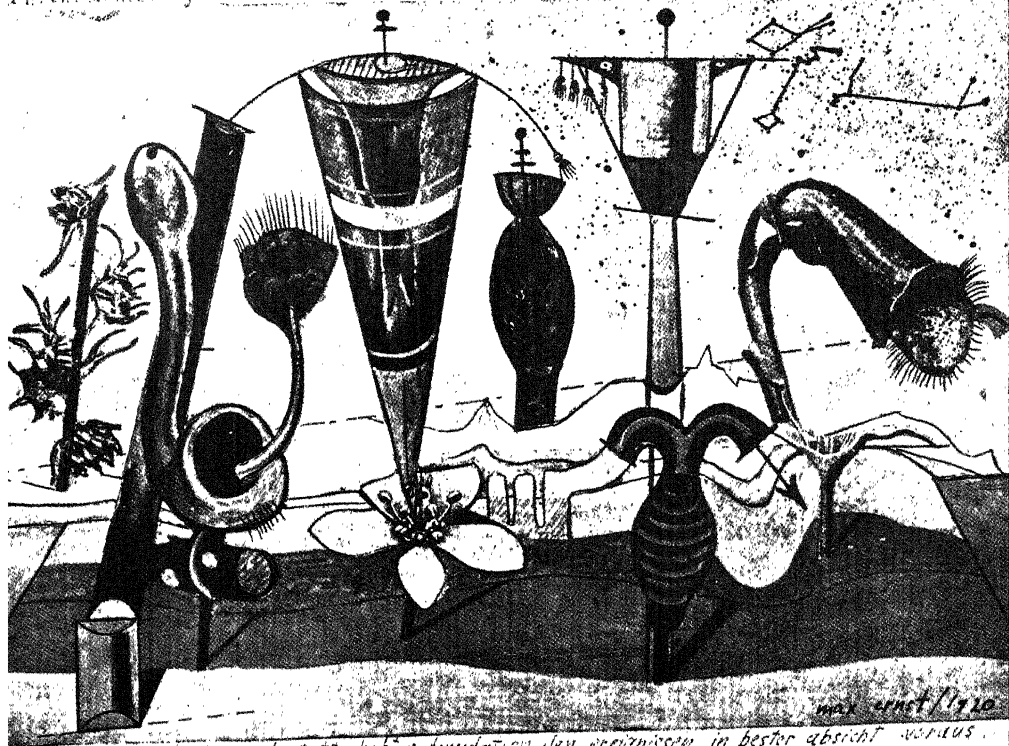




38. THE EXQUISITE CORPSE: Greta Knutson, Valentine Hugo,  
André Breton, Tristan Tzara



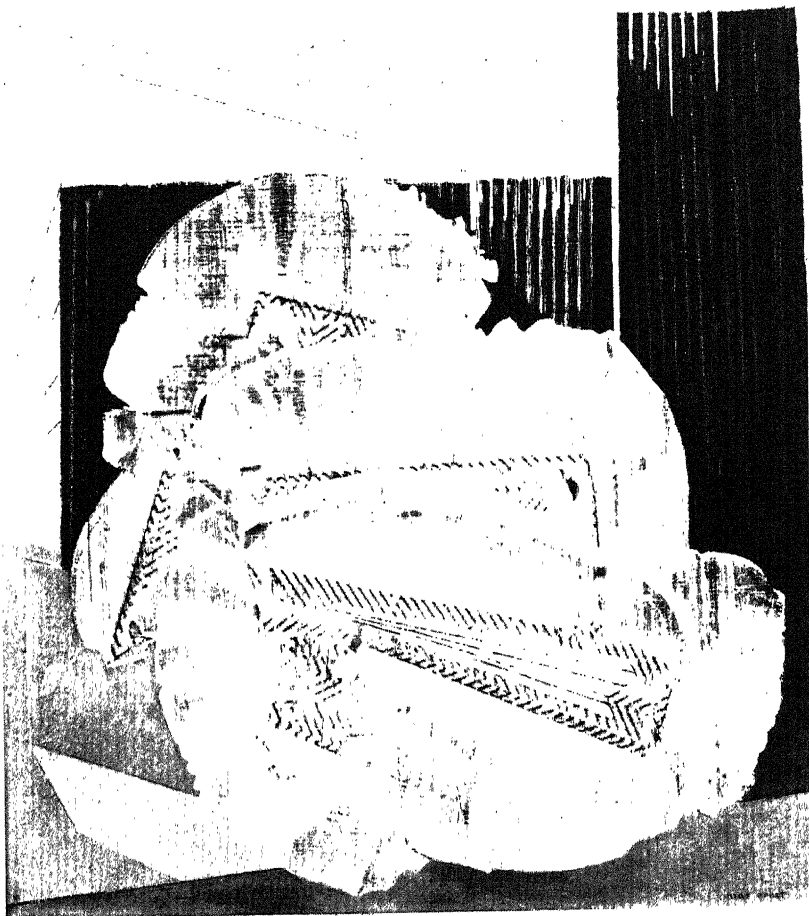
alten schweizer dachthaler resinat und mandeln schlagen die eingeborenen mittelalterlichen



meerschäum und allen nach stattgehabter denudation den ereignissen in bester absicht voraus.

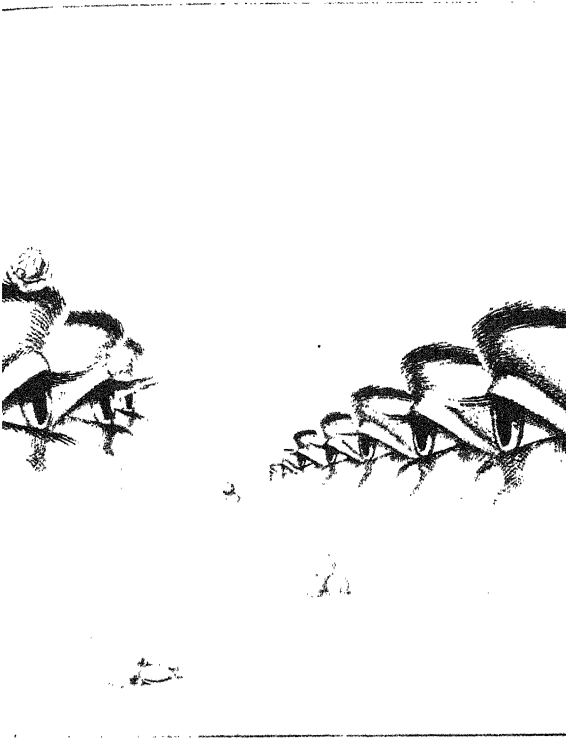
39. ERNST: Zu Meerschaum. 1920



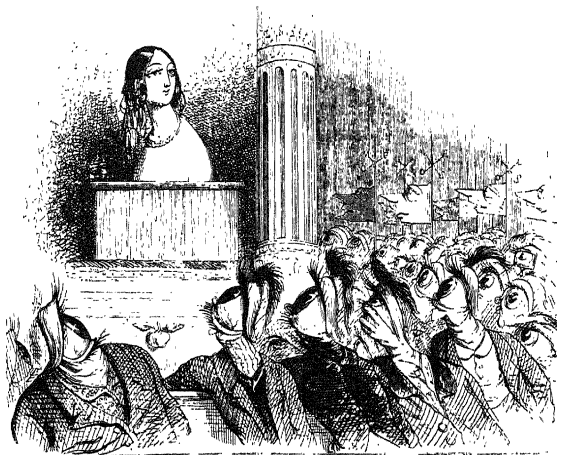


40. ERNST: *Coquillages*





1. ERNST: *Poème Visible*.



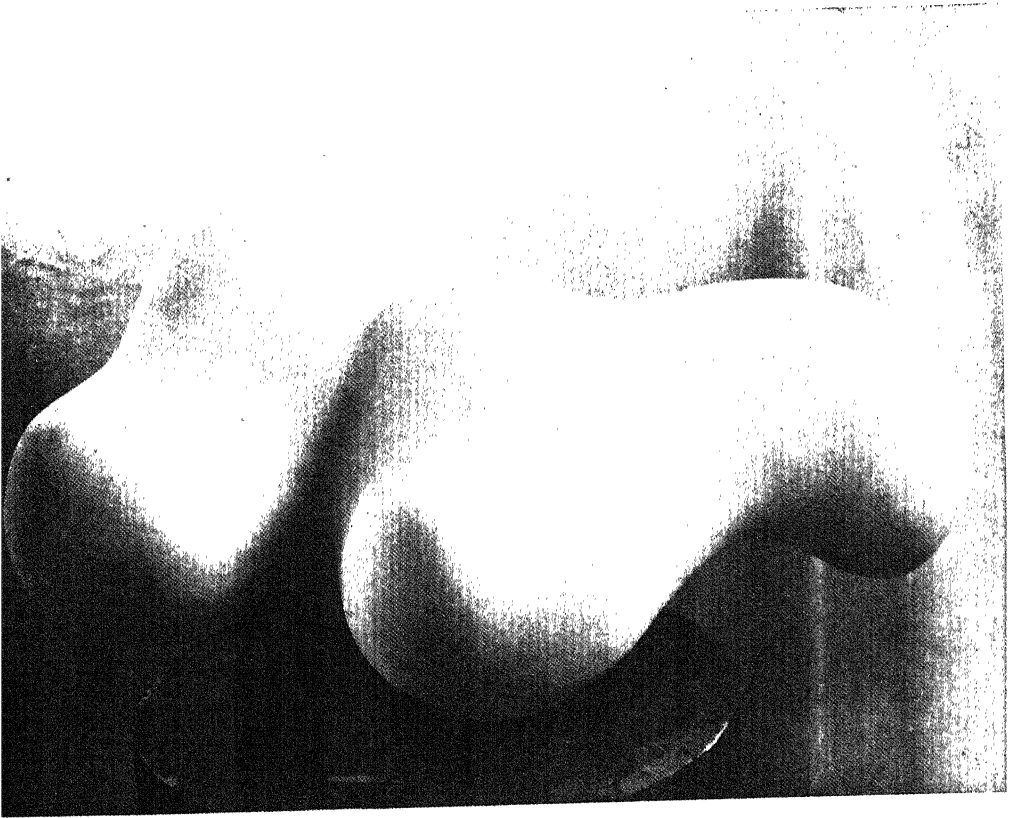
GRANDVILLE: *Un autre Monde*. 1843





42. ARP: *Nombril-Buste-Soulier*. 1929





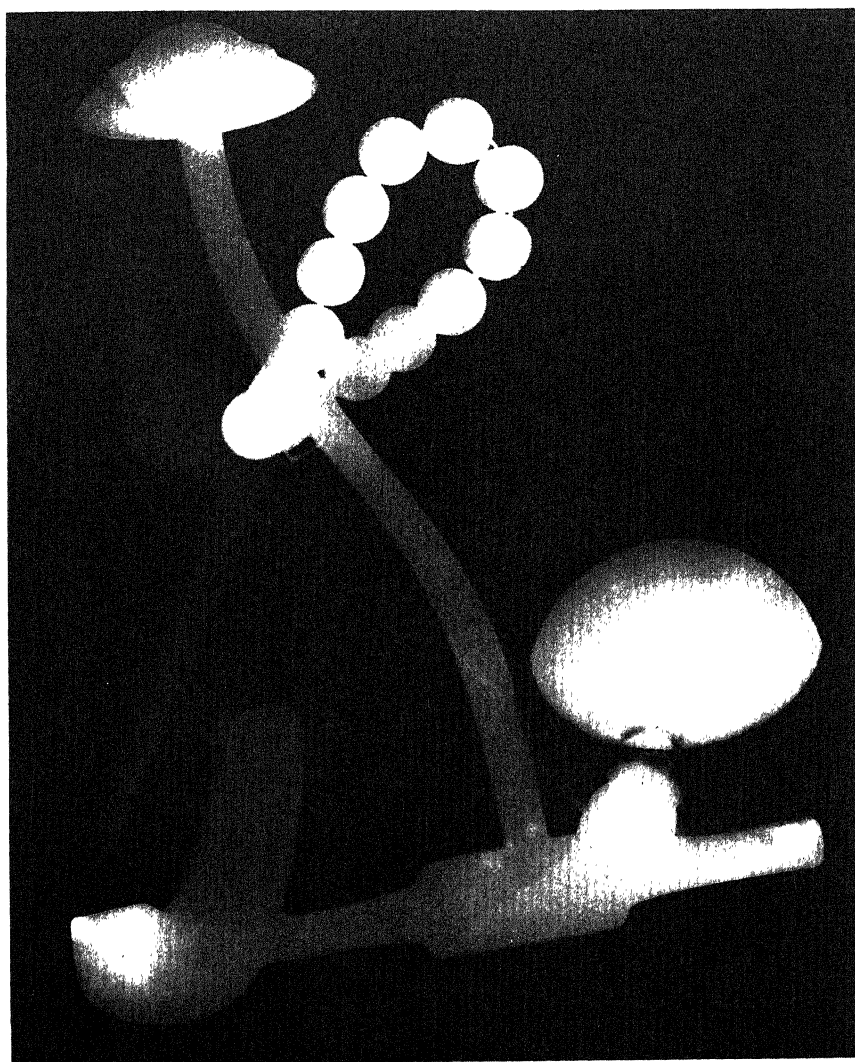
43. ARP: *Concrétion Humaine*. 1934





44. MASSON: *Des Poissons dessinés sur la Sable*. 1927





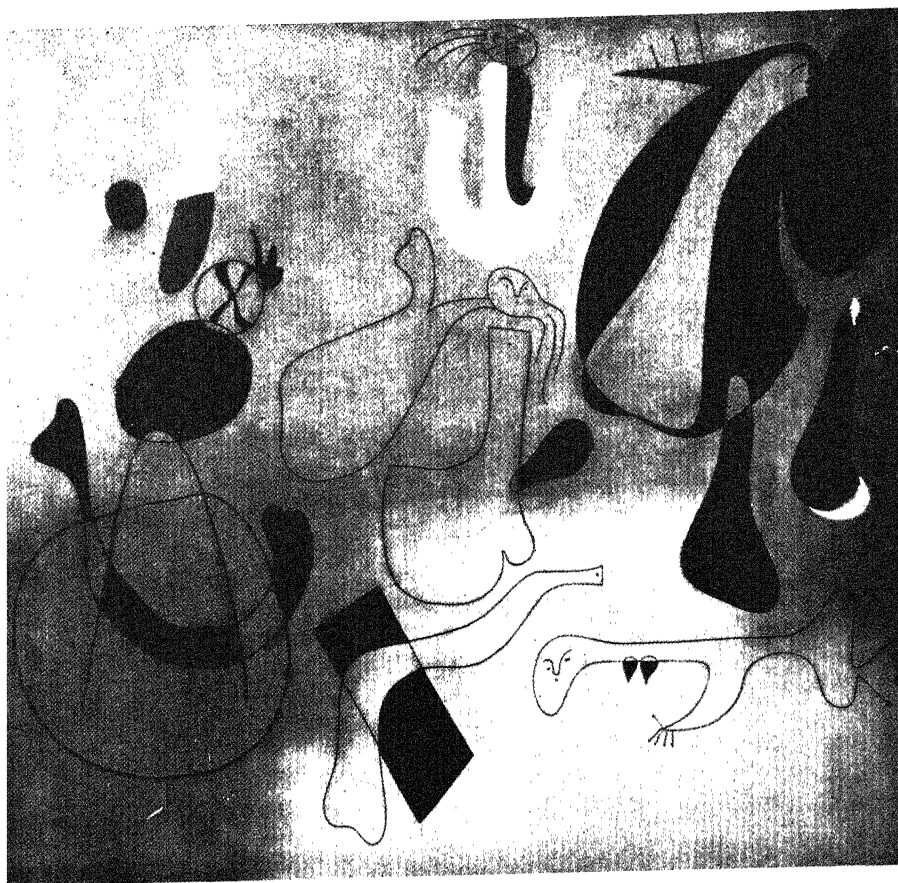
45. MAN RAY: *Rayograph*





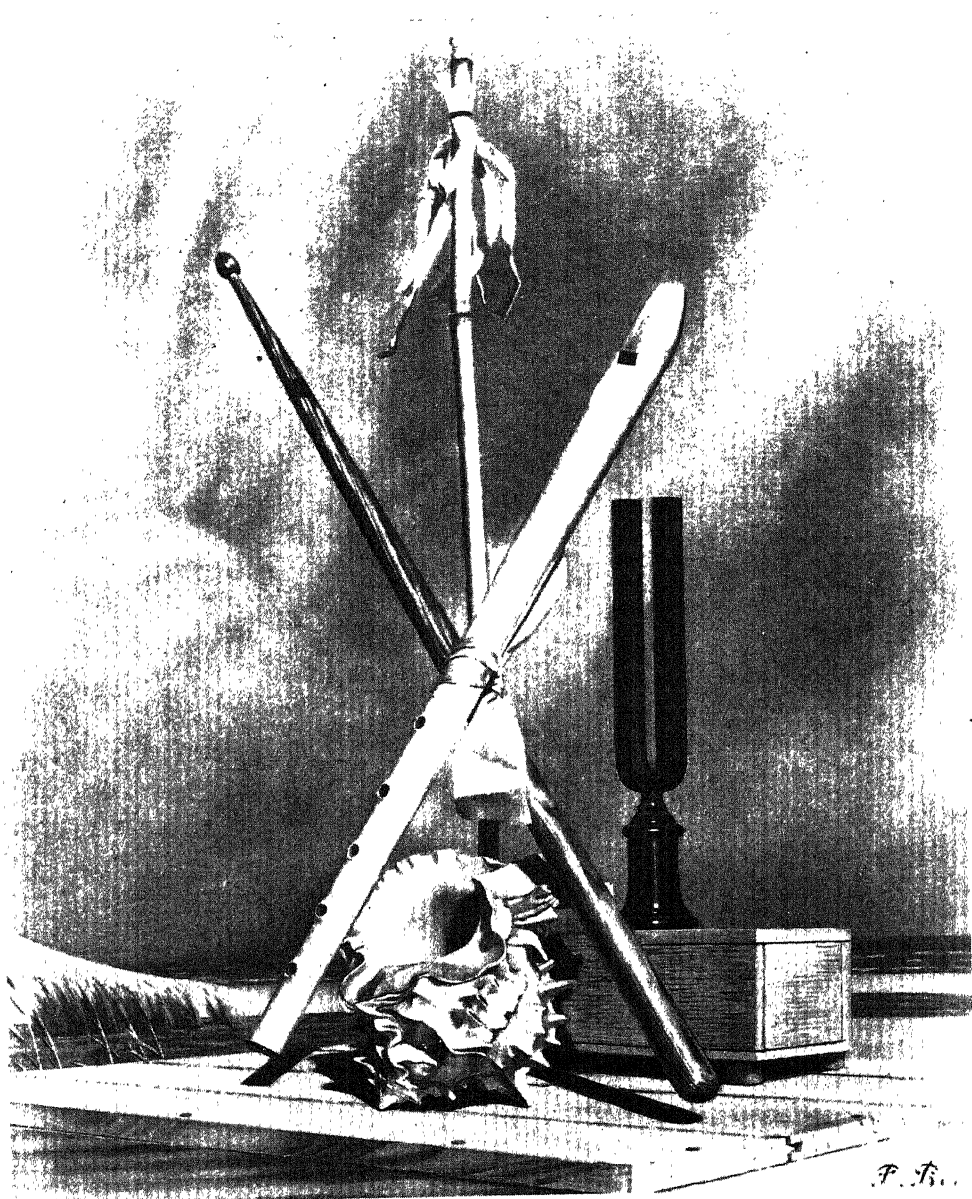
46. MIRÓ: *Septembre*. 1933





47. MIRÓ: *Figures*. 1933

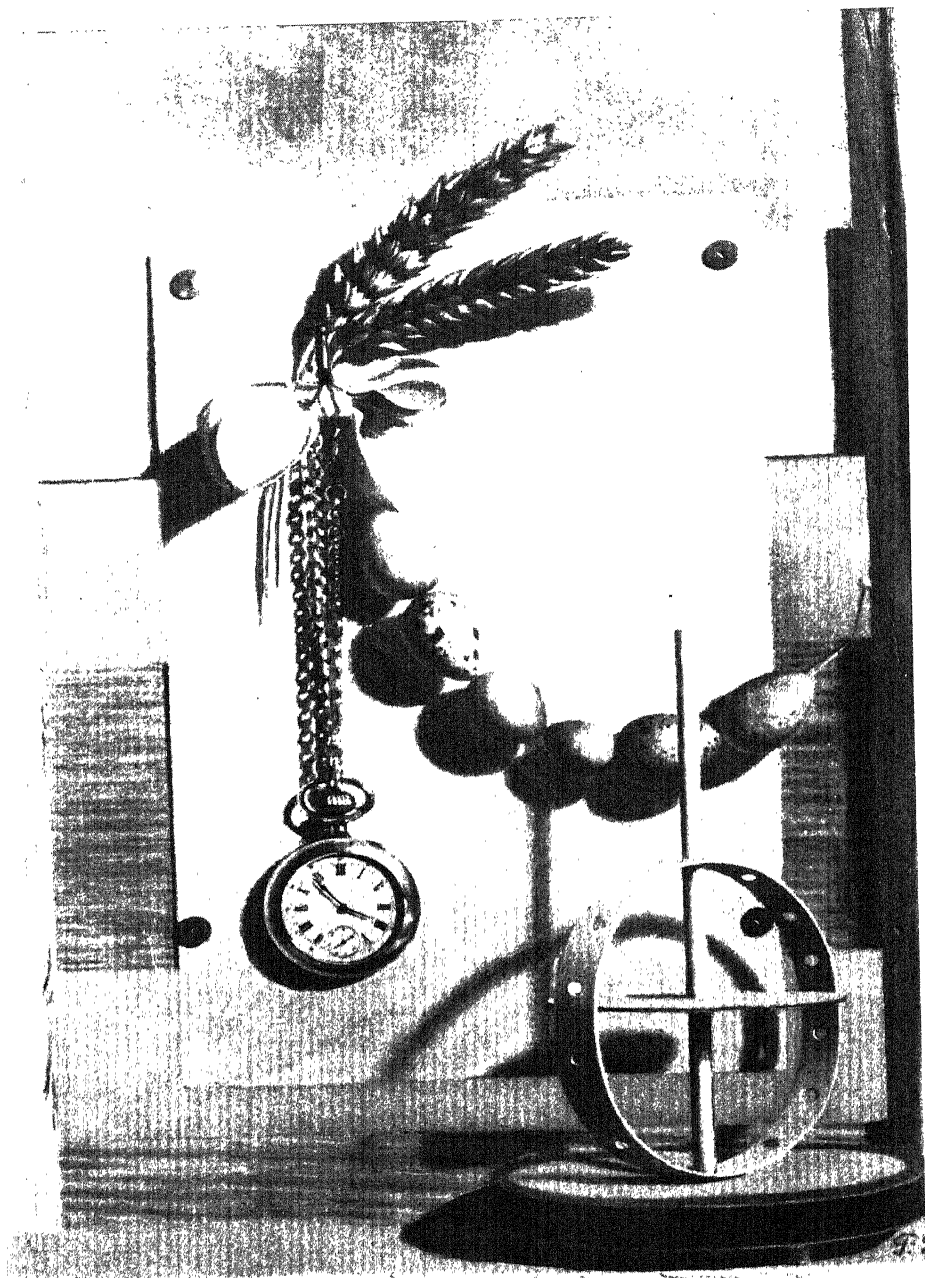




F. R.

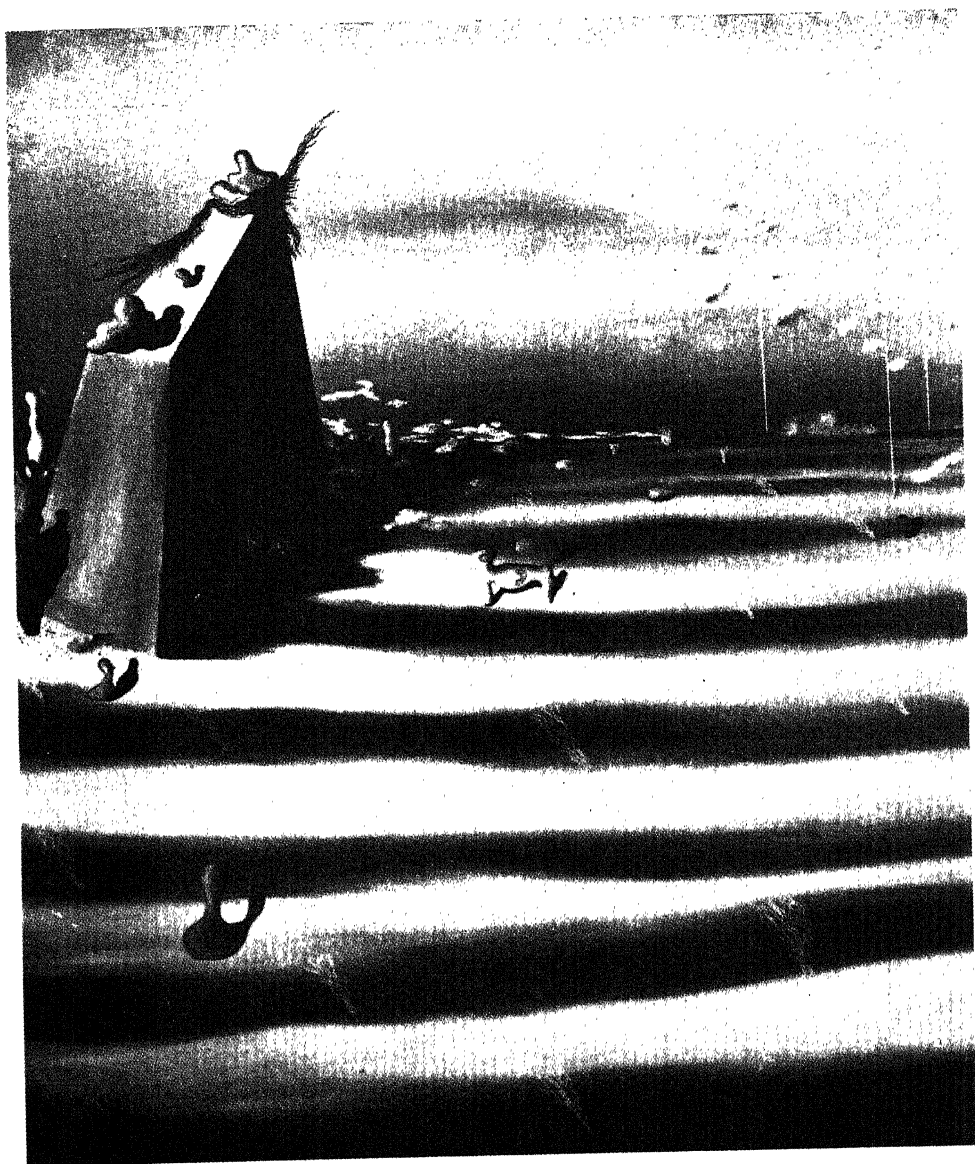
48. ROY: *Musique No. 3*





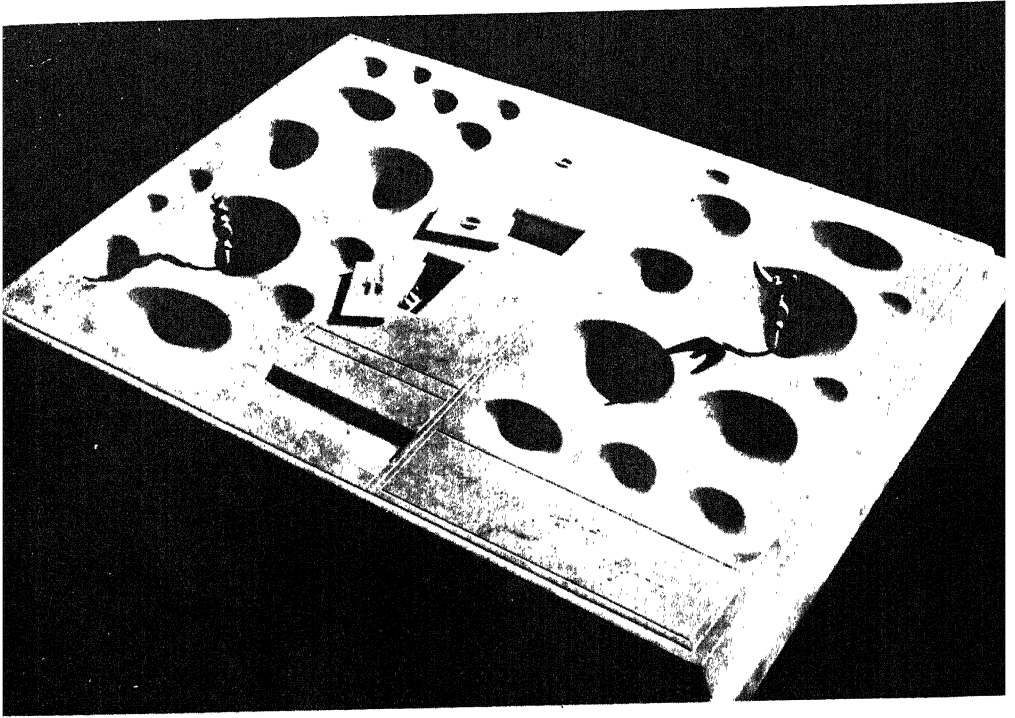
49. ROY: *Summer Hour*





50. TANGUY: *Un Grand Tableau qui représente un Paysage*. 1927

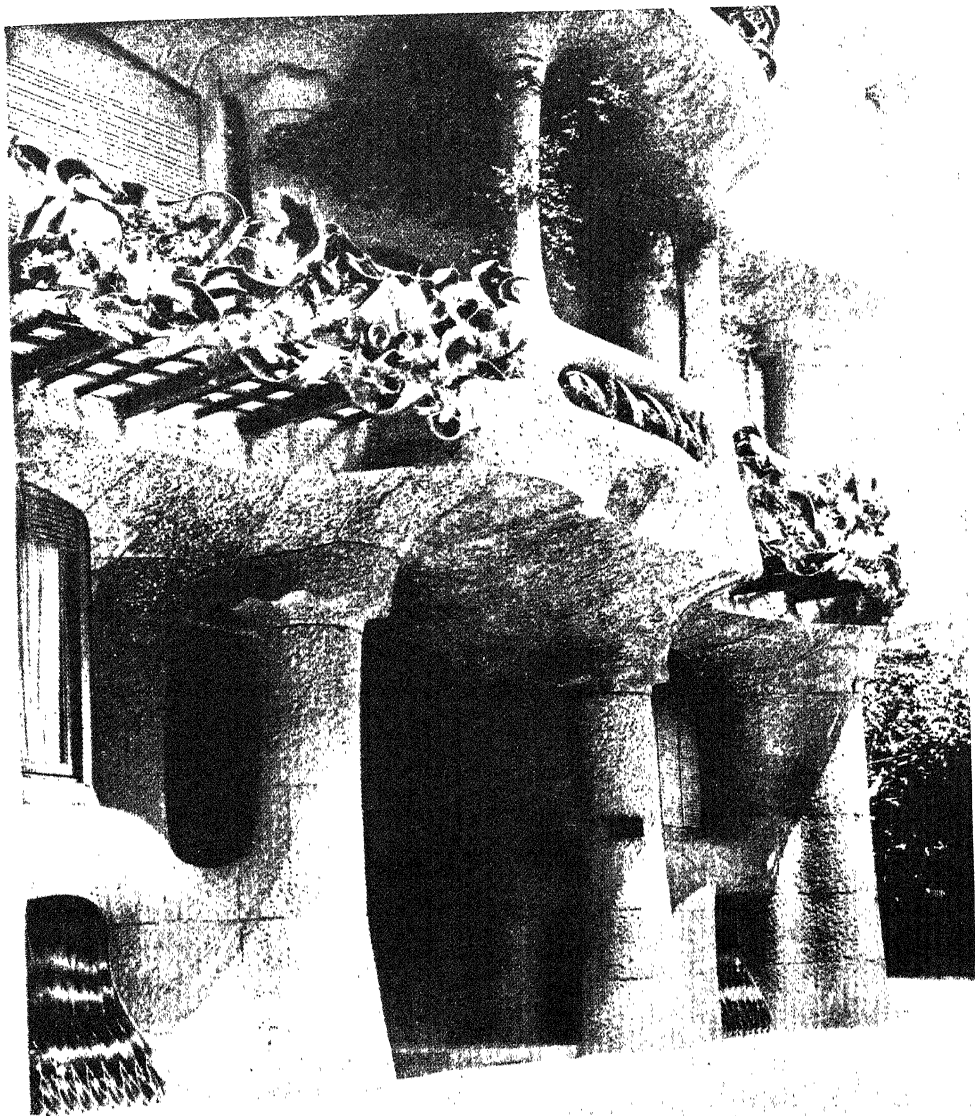




51. GIACOMETTI: *On ne joue plus*. 1931-32

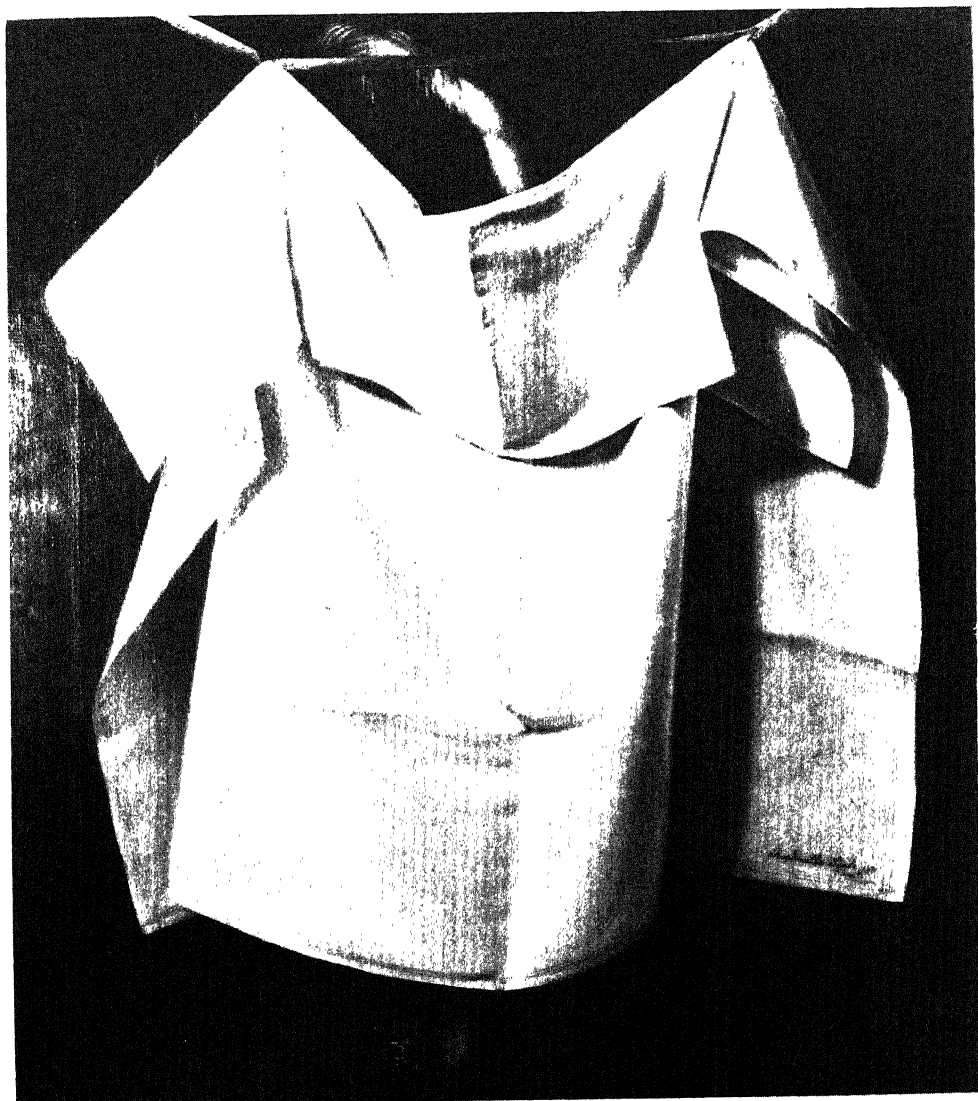
(Photograph by Man Ray)





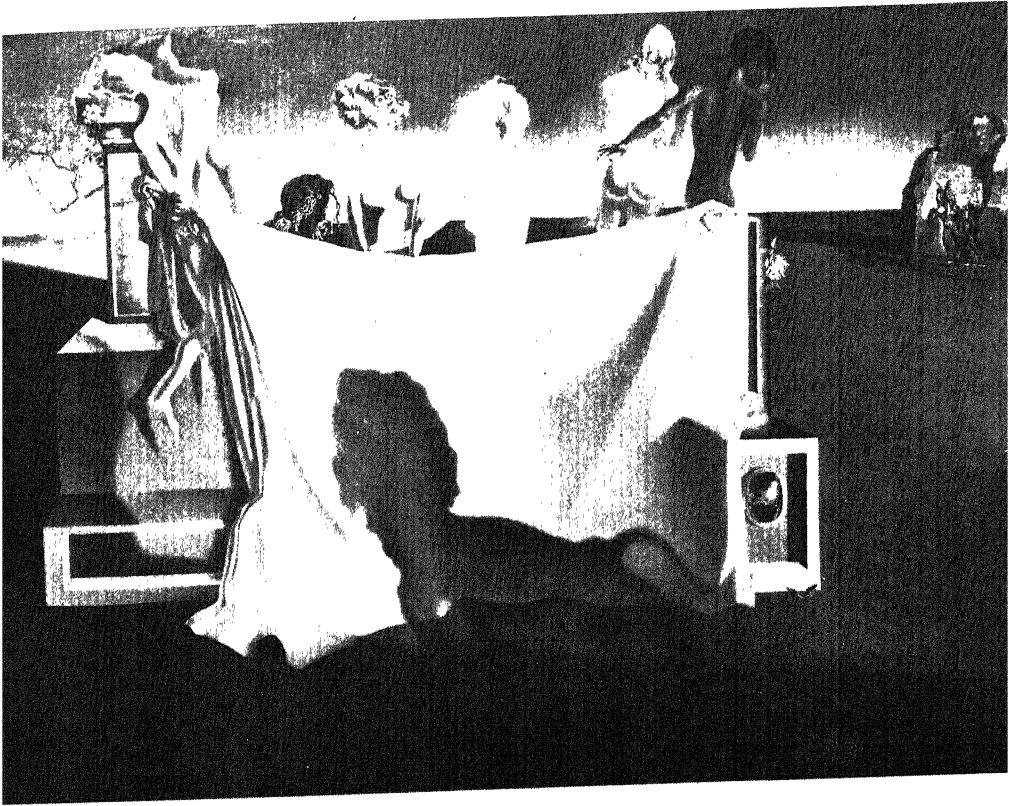
53. ANTONI GAUDÍ: Façade of the Casa Nila





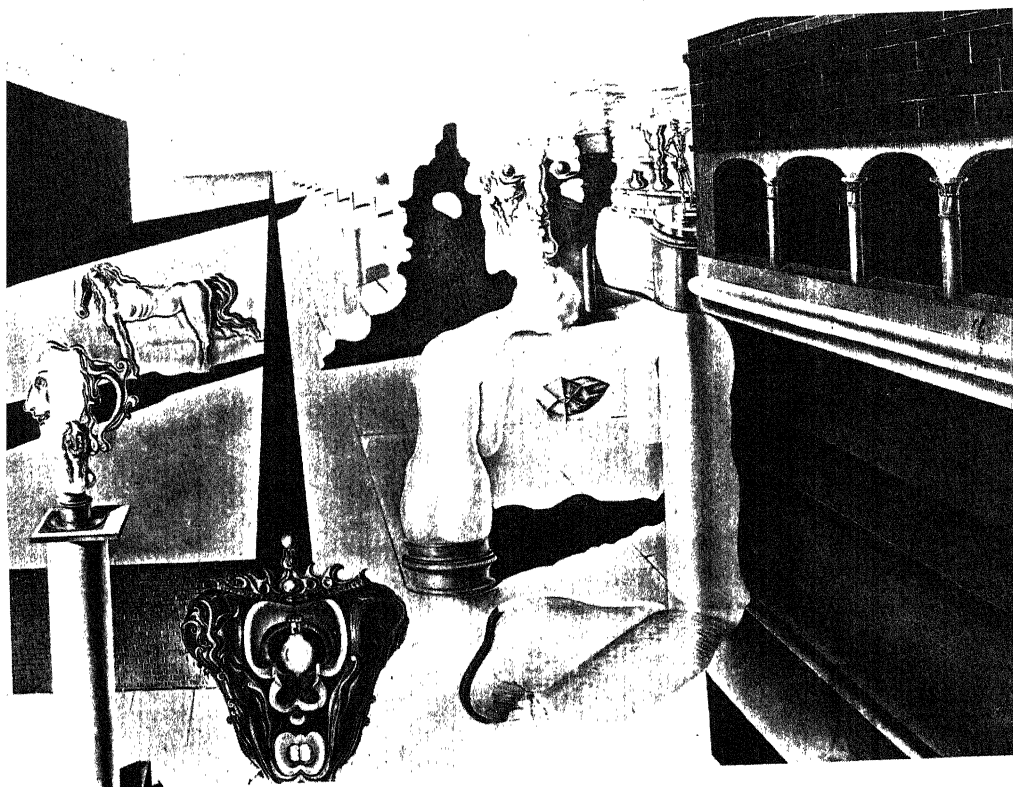
54. RAPHAELLE PEALE, (1774-1825): *After the Bath*





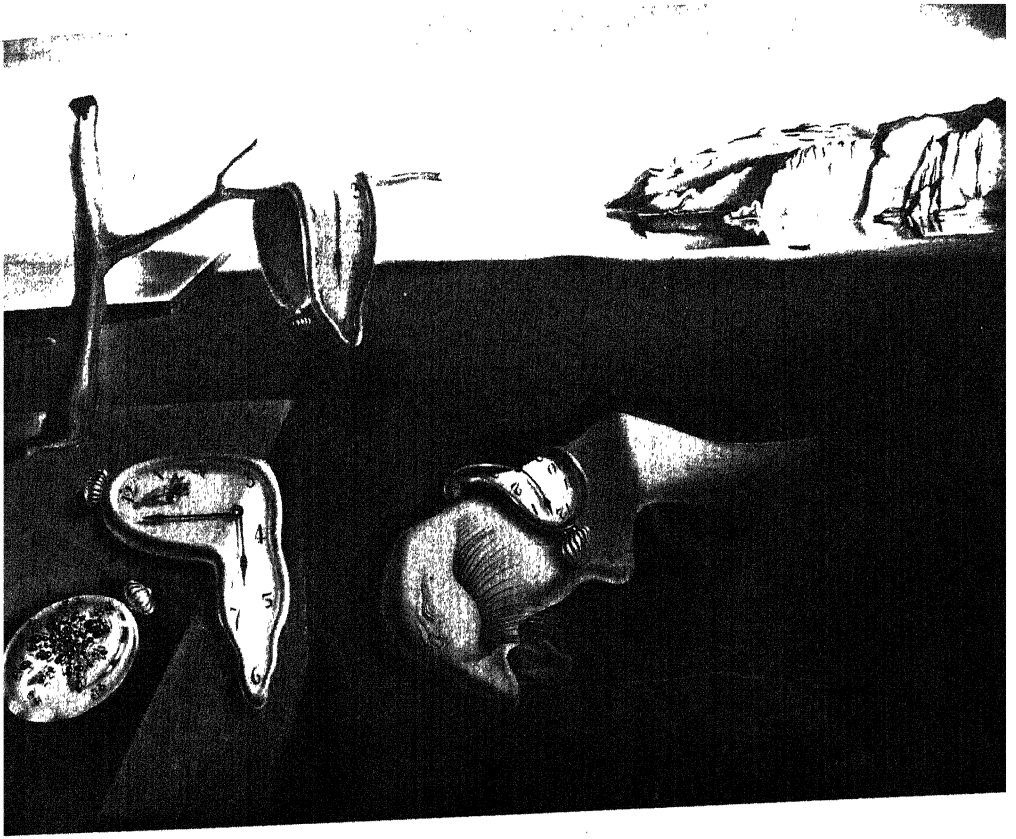
55. DALÍ: *Le Lion*. 1931





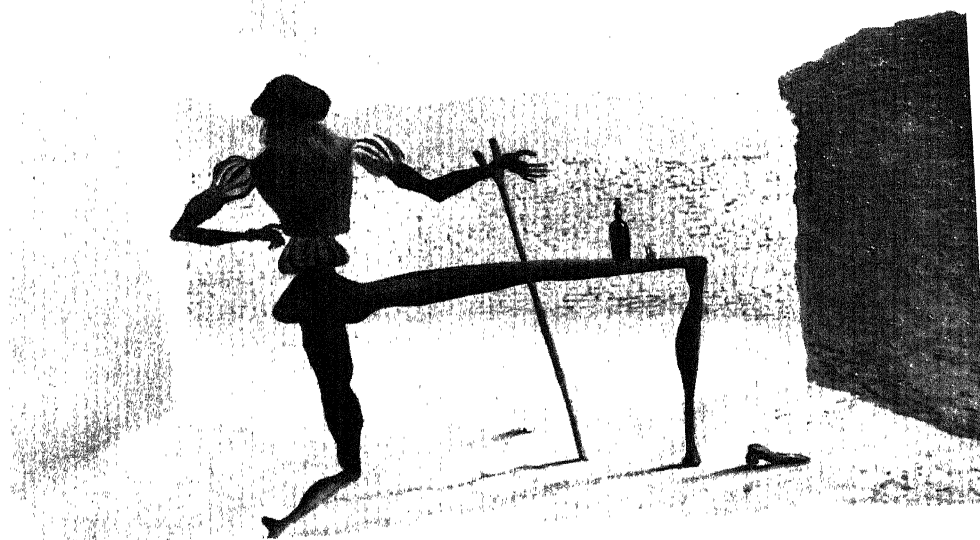
56. DALI: *L'Homme Invisible*





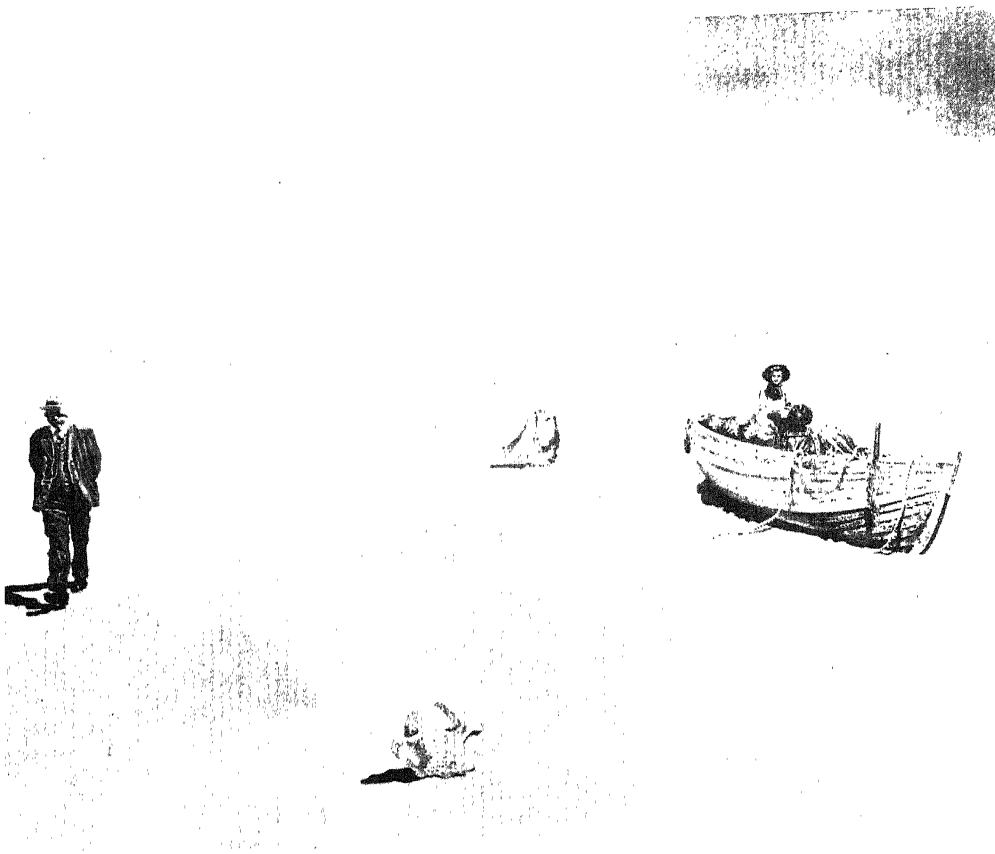
57. DALÍ: *The Persistence of Memory*. 1931





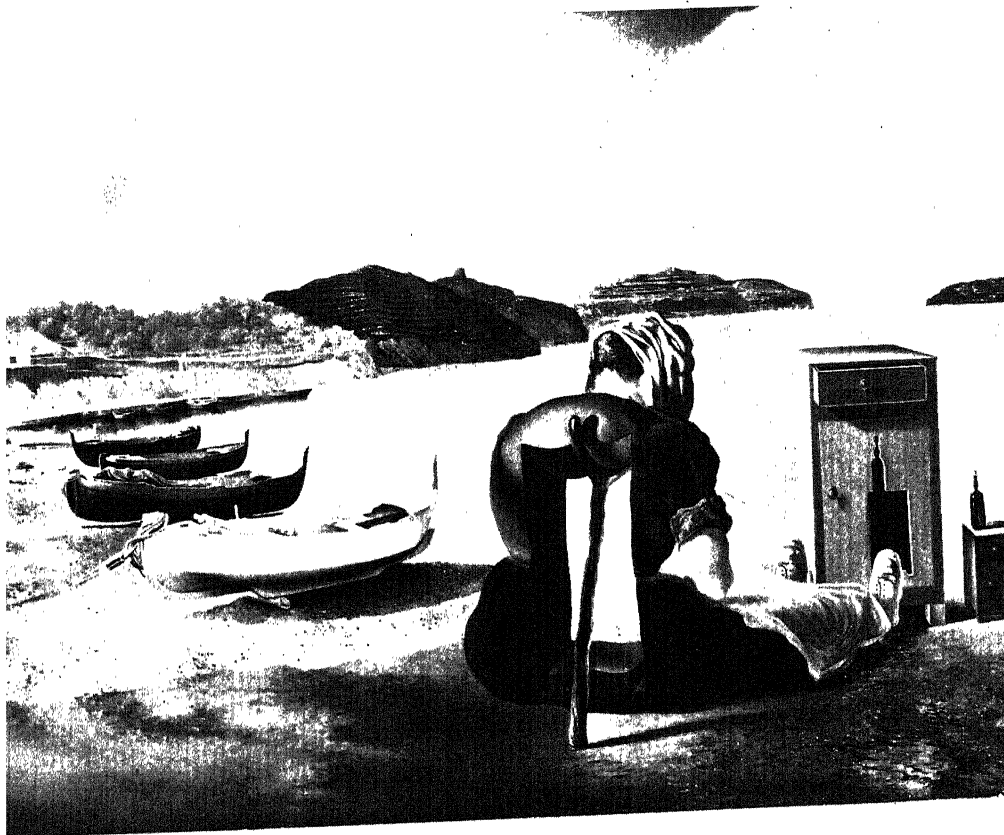
58. DALÍ: *Le Spectre de Vermeer de Delft*. 1934





59. DALÍ: *Paranoiac Astral Image*. 1934





60. DALÍ: *The Meaning of Furniture-Nutrition*. 1934











